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THE
EPISTLE OF PAUL
THE APOSTLE
TO THE EPHESIANS

STUDIES IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

By

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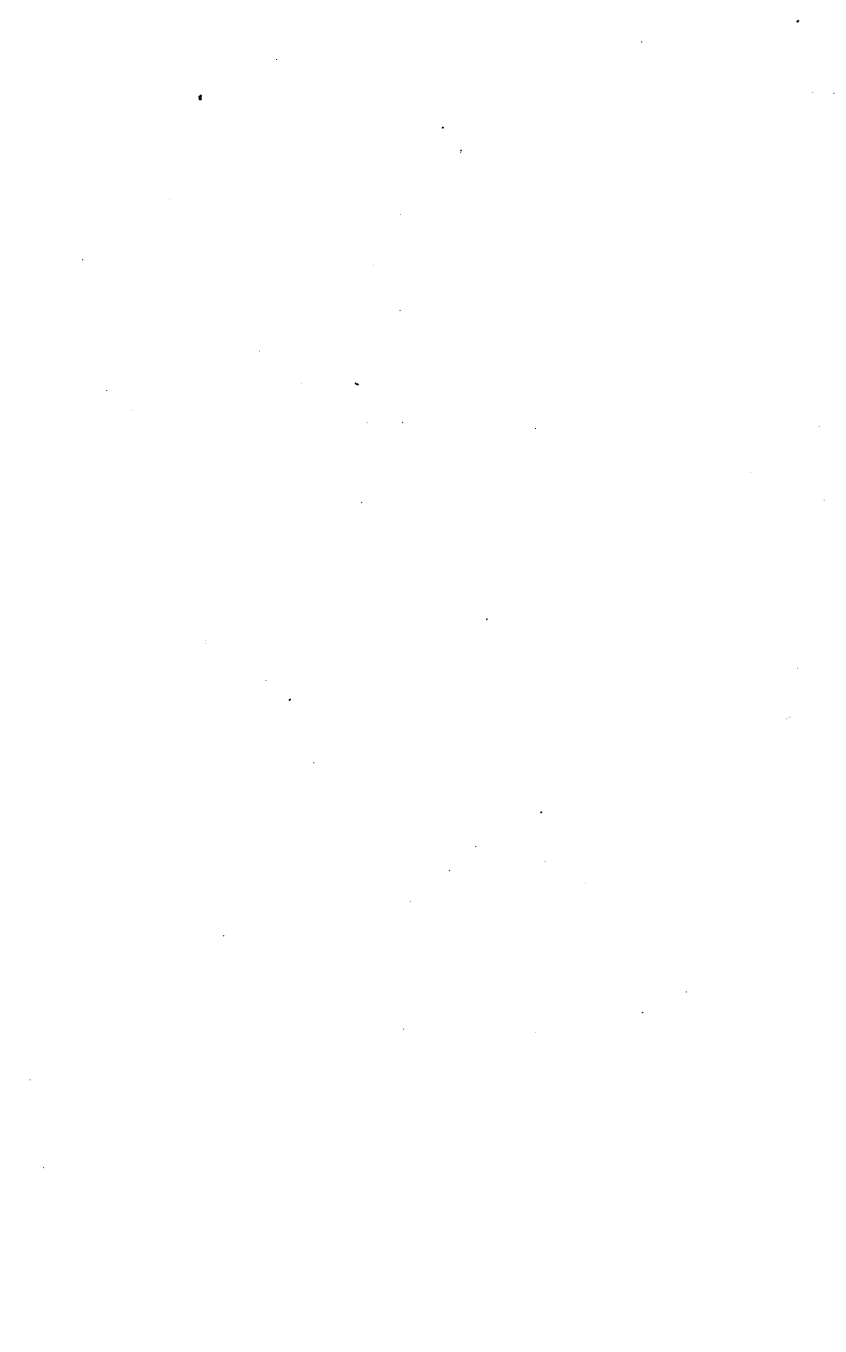
To

MY WIFE, EDITH WILLSON PELLEGRIN, *whose patient, loving co-operation has been of constant inspiration,*

MY AUNTS, ELISE AUBERT AND NETTIE L. AUBERT *of Anaheim, California, whose prayerful earnest teaching during my boyhood brought me to accept Christ as my personal Saviour,*

DR. JOSEPH P. SHEARER, *of Washington, D. C., whose skillful surgery and effective ministrations prolonged life sufficient for these studies,*

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PREFACE

DR. J. H. JOWETT, in *The Preacher: His Life and Work* says: "In all our preaching we must preach for verdicts. We must present our case, we must seek a verdict, and we must ask for immediate execution of the verdict. We are not in the pulpit to please the fancy. We are not there even to inform the mind, or to disturb the emotions, or to sway the judgment. These are only preparatives along the journey. Our ultimate object is to move the will and set it in another course, to increase its pace, and to make it sing in "the ways of God's commandments." Paul was an adept at this sort of ministry. Yet, many feel the intense doctrinal content of his letters too rich a diet for their personal devotions. Paul's messages ring with earnest entreaty for the sort of living the church should be experiencing today.

Many splendid historical backgrounds have been written for Ephesians. Numerous critical studies bring light upon the opinions of scholars of various ages, their differing shades of opinion and frequent conflict of idea; expository sermons cover choice parts of Paul's Letter to The Ephesians. Alexander Maclaren stands conspicuous in this field. Dr. Charles Erdman has published a matchless devotional commentary giving the sweep of Paul's thought and directing it to our personal problems. Numerous doctrinal works enter into the theological concepts of Paul to enlighten those theologically disposed; a few homiletical studies have been published for the preacher to stimulate his thought and direct it towards the task of sermon preparation; but there has remained the task of minutely examining the precious phrases and words of this letter and relating them to the structure of Holy Scriptures, the life and experiences of Paul, and interpreting them to our life and times.

Many read an assigned passage from a sense of duty or spend a pre-determined period in Bible reading, without really knowing what it is all about. The mind is left in a sort of stupor of bewilderment. Some read prayerfully asking the Holy Spirit to reveal the message for the day, but close their

mind to light which others may shed upon the passage by a varying interpretation which may bring new meanings and significance. An earnest effort has been made to humbly bring some of these viewpoints to the reader without dogmatic statement, and at the same time to challenge the mind with the opportunity of making Paul's message real in the lives of today. The world, the church and each individual needs the message which flamed in the heart of Paul; life would take new meaning if it were pulsating with the sublime faith of this child of God. Vigorous aggression and optimism would define the spirit of Christian enterprise if the few chapters of this letter could be digested, thoroughly assimilated and practiced.

If the pages which follow cause one to handle with more reverence the Sacred Book, to seek with patient humility guidance from the Word of God, any effort will have been more than repaid. Illustrative material has been purposely omitted with the hope that after meditating upon the phrases of Paul's message, individual experience will turn the leaves of memory, or quicken the eye to comprehend the way and works of God in everyday life and bring to mind from this rich source of material a consciousness of those facts and indications in the life of any child of God which will cause the heart to glow, the mind to be warmed, the soul to be radiant, and the lips to speak forth in praise of Him whom we love and serve.

Grateful appreciation is expressed for faithful and largely gratuitous service in transcription which has been given by Grace Van Demark, Mary Greenway, and Norma Wilson. Without this co-operation the task would have been difficult.

God grant His blessing upon what has been done for love of Him and in gratitude for answered prayers.

H. F. P.

Watervliet, N. Y.

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CHAPTER ONE

I.

THE WRITER AND HIS READERS

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus."
—EPH. 1:1.

THE WRITER.

Paul: Strenuous years of missionary work had left their mark upon Paul, whose physical condition, according to tradition, was none too rugged. Long and perilous journeys free from even ordinary comforts of travel, opposition from those whose profits he was lessening because customers preferred Christ's way to idolatrous worship, the unquenchable fire burning within him impelling his use of every hour to the glory of God, imprisonments, persecutions and torments of body and soul—all had left scars upon his body, wrinkles on his face and bent the proud figure which in former years had persecuted early Christians.

Paul is now chained to a guard, enduring his first imprisonment. Certain liberties were granted him. Friends could visit him. Messengers from various churches established by him sought his advice and returned with letters to their flocks. Members of Cæsar's household heard both by rumor and from his lips the story of his conversion and Christ's great love for them. Even in the vicious atmosphere of a Roman court some yielded their lives to the Saviour and were known as "the saints that are of Cæsar's household." If a slave or official could live a saintly life in the midst of the profligacy, immorality and cruelty of a Roman court, none should complain of difficulty in living according to Jesus' way today.

The thought uppermost in Paul's mind had no room for

those controversies which rocked some of the early churches to their foundation. His thinking was mellowed by suffering. The crown which fadeth not away was almost within his grasp. His parting message must be the way of salvation—the wonderful grace of Jesus which made complete salvation possible for both Jew and Gentile. His intellectual battles had proven conclusively that no heathen religion could compare with his Master's teaching. The gospel of Christ was the power of God unto salvation to all who by faith received it. The arms of this gospel were stretched to all men. Everyone who repented of his sin and received Christ as a personal Saviour, was welcomed as a member of the Church of Christ.

HIS AUTHORITY.

An Apostle: Do you catch the thrill of these words, “an apostle”? Paul, the Christian would have been glorious. At one time he had consented to the stoning of a Christian martyr. Now he himself was suffering for his faith. To be a follower of the Son of God was a privilege; to sit at the feet of the great Teacher and learn about life and eternity was an opportunity. But Paul, “an apostle,” ranking with the eleven who lived with Jesus, whose story unveiled their association with their Friend—His conversations, His miracles, His life—what an honor! Paul had been proud of his nationality and race. He was a free-born Roman citizen, a Jew and a Pharisee. None could boast more than he of his ancestry and intellectual schooling in the wisdom of his fathers. But Paul, an apostle, meant that he had received a commission from Christ. He had Divine authority to teach and work miracles (Acts 19:12). On the Damascus road the risen Christ had appeared to him in blinding fashion (Acts 9:5). Now his standing is that of an envoy. As an ambassador, his words have authority, his life is an open book, every action is under criticism—but God is with him.

Paul was not alone in possessing this authority. The Scriptures tell us of eight which were recognized as apostles in the early church:

1. Barnabas (Acts 14:4);
2. Andronicus (Rom. 16:7);
3. Junia (Rom. 16:7);
4. Apollos (I Cor. 4:6);
5. Sosthenes (I Cor. 1:1);
6. Paul (Gal. 1:1);
7. Silas (I Thess. 1:1,6; 2:6);
8. Timothy (I Thess. 1:1,6).

None, however, attained the heights reached by their contemporary. Paul was the superior of them all. To Paul, an apostle, belonged the sacred and difficult task of winning the Gentile world to Christianity. The Jews did not relish this inclusion. Their attitude would not give prompt acceptance to Gentiles sitting in equality with them at church assemblies. Paul became the Gentiles' champion.

DIVINELY GUIDED.

By the will of God: Personal ambition, then, as now, lead many to desire elevation of office. The mother of one of the first disciples was anxious that her son be given a place of honor near Jesus in heaven. It was not only at feasts and entertainments that chief seats were desired. The organizations of the church, reaching further and further into the known geography of the world, the church growing by leaps and bounds as followers accepted Christ as their Redeemer, gave fertile opportunity to ambitious souls to seek elevation of office for themselves. Paul was not one of these. Paul had been appointed "by the will of God." The cold, vindictive Pharisee "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," carrying letters, that if "he found any of Christ's way, whether they be men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem," was not considering apostleship as he journeyed near Damascus. But God saw in Paul what He sees in His creatures today, undeveloped possibilities, and wasting energies. God needed a fearless voice, a trained mind, a tireless worker, a natural leader, so God spake, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"

Later, when Ananias, unable to forget the old Saul, questions the sincerity of his conversion, and fears that he is a wolf in sheep's clothing, the Lord puts Ananias at ease: "Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15).

Saul assumes the mantle of his Divine commission, straightway preaching in the synagogue that Christ is the Son of God. When the Jews lay in wait to kill him, he fearlessly goes under the guidance of Barnabas to Jerusalem, the very stronghold of the Jews, and speaks boldly the name of Jesus. The risen Christ has called him. God is with him. Who can oppose him or injure him? Is it any wonder that as the churches were edified and walked in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, memberships grew?

The church, today, needs voices that are fearless, that have the gift of His Spirit, that are fully persuaded that He is able to save and keep all who come unto the Father.

Paul glories in his direct, Divine commission. He never forgets that he is a vessel chosen of the Lord. Yet none could ever accuse him of boasting in the unpleasant and distasteful manner of some because of this advantage. Humility characterizes great characters called of God to a noble task. Their Divine task never allows them to grow weary of well-doing or let good enough alone. These never reach retirement age or desire to be pensioned in the service of Jesus. While there is life there is a task to do, while there is consciousness, some lost soul may be won into the fold. Day and night, the Light beckons on and on and on. No wonder prison cells were the studies from which came the great messages. Do not marvel that the clanking of a prisoner's chain becomes musical accompaniment to hymns praising a Divine Redeemer Who saves from sin, or that guarding heathen soldiers challenges Paul to tell the story of the Cross until mortal life should pass into life eternal. "Paul, an apostle, by the will of God." My reader, by the will of God, what are you? Do you tremble with eagerness to carry His message a bit further?

SYMPATHETIC LISTENERS.

To the saints: Do not become confused by the word "saints." These were not dead heroes of the faith whose lives of martyrdom gave them a place of honor and worship by their fellows. These characters did not rest in effigy in some cloistered nook surrounded by burning candles. Their resting places were not the goal of diseased or distressed pilgrims, seeking health and restoration of body and soul.

The Letter to the Ephesians was written to living, struggling, normal believers in Christ who were tempted every day. The Ephesian Christian was no sinless saint. Paul was thinking of a consecrated group who had set their lives apart for the Master's use. Each had determined, by the grace of God, to live pure, godly, devoted lives for Him, following their normal occupations as shepherds, agriculturists, weavers, dyers of cloth, merchants, sailors, and householders. These readers no longer relied upon themselves for strength, they looked unto Jesus the Author of their faith. Their lives had been consecrated to God in Christ (I Cor. 1:2) and with the help of the Divine Spirit every hour brought its challenge of being true and steadfast to Him. In other words, the saints mentioned here, are any and all true members of the church in general, who make an honest effort to live as Christ would have them.*

Dr. Charles Brown brings this message to us, "What is your life and what is Christ to you? There is such a thing as an unenlightened, ill-formed, shallow, impoverished Christian life, a life that has neither strength nor robustness, that brings no credit to the gospel and no glory to God." The life of the Ephesian church was red-blood sainthood, fighting to maintain its identity and perpetuate itself in a sin-cursed, idol-worshipping community, prosperous in worldly wealth, cultured in intellectual attainments and yet hungering and thirsting for the satisfying ministrations of some unknown God greater than Diana. Christ needs saints today, live saints, practicing His Sermon on the Mount, struggling against the temptation which so easily besets, witnessing in classroom, factory, office and home, living a life set apart, relying solely upon Him for strength for hourly needs.

FIRST READ BY THE EPHESIANS.

At Ephesus: Three of the oldest manuscripts omit the words "at Ephesus." This omission would mean that the original letter was intended for a circular message to be read by any, or all of the churches. As copies of the letter were made for forwarding, the name of the local church was included to make the message personal and direct. The absence of the usual personal greetings in the letter is given as a reason why this letter may have had a wider intention than the particular group at Ephesus.

However, the above possible omission from some manuscripts does not in the least prove that it was not originally addressed to the church at Ephesus. About three years had been spent by Paul in building the church at Ephesus. Bitter opposition had been stirred against him. The leaders Paul left behind when he continued his journeys, would be in need of stimulation. The Book of Acts (20:7) describes such a message given in an hour of need. What a wonderful sales-manager this man would have been, supervising all parts of the territory assigned to him!

The message of this letter was most appropriate to this particular field. Idolatrous rites were constantly being practiced. Much of the city's revenue came from the sale of small, miniature Dianas, serving as mementoes to visiting worshippers or as household idols to remind them of the great image of Diana, which was supposed to have fallen from heaven itself. Vice and superstition abounded. Recreation was not according to Christian standards. The huge amphitheater seating conservatively twenty-four thousand five hundred, or at most fifty thousand, did not have the type of entertainment suitable for a modern parish-hall. Its combats were to the death. Gambling flourished. Vice clung close to the theater.

The Ephesians were highly educated. Compare this letter with the average best seller of today in its challenge to mentality. The first sentence of twelve verses is so involved as to require absolute concentration to follow development of thought in the mind of the writer. How many with a modern high school or college education can claim to master the

subject matter in several readings? And yet this letter was written to people living in what we choose to call the distant, untutored past, untouched with the refinements of modern civilization. After reading this letter to the Ephesian church, we can well imagine that if a group of average Ephesians had been invited to be dinner guests in a modern home, conversation might struggle to keep pace with lofty philosophical themes chosen by them, yet we compliment ourselves with being learned.

The Temple of Diana was known as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Two hundred and twenty years were required to complete it. Great masses of shining marble created a structure three hundred and forty-two feet long by one hundred and sixty-four feet broad. Hundreds of great columns fifty-six feet high added dignity and appealed to lovers of beauty. The whole created an atmosphere of humility, wonder, adoration and worship for the magnificent statue of the goddess within. For generations the city had worshiped at this magnificent shrine, which was a mecca for thousands of picturesque visitors from every section of the world. Paul was asking the Ephesians to desert this magnificent temple and worship God in small groups, in the privacy of some home or a secluded spot outside the city. No images were to act as reminders of sacred ceremonies. God needed no such reminders. The temple of God was in the heart; the heart was an altar upon which sacrifices might be made. Discipleship called for sacrifice, but these people were used to sacrifice and hardship.

FULL OF FAITH.

And to the faithful: In this atmosphere of superstition, sensuality, selfishness and idolatrous worship, men and women stayed faithful to the church. The word "faithful" in reality means "full of faith." Some believe the writer is speaking of those who exhibited the quality of fidelity. What does it matter? Faith had fidelity for its fruit. Fidelity to Christ is impossible without faith in Him and faith in Him cannot have the right ring to it unless it hardens into fidelity. The church at Ephesus had its trials like any church. Ordinary

responsibilities were neglected. The most spiritual became worldly minded. The warmest became lukewarm and cold. Mammon held more appeal than God. The keyworkers to whom an appeal was to be made were certainly those who had passed their tests and still remained faithful. A fire is started from glowing embers. These few, and I presume they were a few, were saints in the making. They had endeavored to keep that spark which they had received from above. Someone has remarked that a saint is one who becomes Christlike in daily service and who also is constantly on the lookout for other saints. He wants to get right with God and realizes that he cannot stay right unless others are right with God. His fidelity therefore becomes both selfish and unselfish; selfish, in so far as he knows he cannot live apart from Him, and unselfish, in so far as he realizes his workshop must be clean if his hands are to be kept clean. Godly surroundings are an asset to godliness.

ROOTED IN CHRIST.

In Christ Jesus: "In" looks unimportant as a word. We use it frequently. It has become common. The phrase "in Christ Jesus" seems plain. It appears thirty-three times in the New Testament. On the face of it, a vital relation with Christ is implied. Contact is insufficient, for contact is not sufficient to produce life. The Christian is "in Christ." Nothing less will satisfy his needs. Some writers speak of faith as reaching towards Christ as a plant towards the light, from which is to come the beauty of its life and the strength to bear its head aloof. Others define faith as resting on Christ as a building rests on a foundation. No other foundation can any man have than that which has been laid by Jesus. Here the faithful are as dependent upon Divine favor as a root is upon the soil which gives it substance. The church is the body of Christ. No Christian can endure apart from Him. The disciple and Master are one, and inseparable.

Paul has been very careful in using the title "Christ Jesus." "Christ" was the Greek version of the Hebrew "Messiah" anticipated for so many centuries by the Jews.

"Jesus" is the sacred name given Him. "Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21)." What name do you use. Is He, to you, the fulfillment of all prophecies? Has He saved you from your sins? Is He your all and in all?

This introduction gives us the highest office in the world—that of apostle, the highest character in the world—that of saint and the highest blessing, the grace and peace of the Lord Himself. As Christina Rossetti sings:

*"I saw a saint—How canst thou tell that he
Thou sawest was a saint?—
I saw one like to Christ so luminously
By patient deeds of love, his mortal taint
Seemed made the groundwork for humility.*

*And when he marked me downcast utterly
Where foul I sat and faint,
The more than ever Christ-like kindled me;
And welcomed me as I had been a saint,
Tenderly stooping low to comfort me.*

*Christ bade him, 'Do thou likewise.' Wherefore he
Waxed zealous to acquaint
His soul with sin and sorrow, if so be
He might retrieve some latent saint:—
Lo, I, with the child God hath given to me."*

II.

THE APOSTOLIC SALUTATION

"Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ."
—EPH. 1:2.

THE DOUBLE BLESSING.

Grace be to you: In the West we greet each other with the common salutation, "Good morning." At the time of Paul the Eastern Christian greeting was, "Grace be to you and peace." As letters were first substitutes for personal conversations, you find most of the epistles to the churches beginning with this Christian blessing. This is true of Rom., I Cor., II Cor., Gal., Phil., Col., I Thess., II Thess., Philemon, I Pet. and II Pet.

The greeting, "Grace be to you," was essentially a European or Greek and Roman greeting used by non-Christians. It was universally heard in the market place and in normal intercourse. The meaning was far warmer than our cold and formal "Good day." It carried with its utterance a desire that the person greeted might have safety during the days, being shielded from all harm or misfortune, and might discover beauty during a day free from all jarring or discordant notes. The Greek idolized beauty of form, countenance and spirit. Greek homes were as beautiful as artistic though could make them. Greek garments were noted for simple grace. The Greeks spent much time over developing beauty of body. To say to a friend, "Grace be to you," was to wish, "May you have beauty of person and soul. May your house and your children and all your surroundings be fair to your eyes. May your lives be like a noble poem or statue, with no discord or deformity to mar them."

Paul spiritualizes this hope. The Gentile converts were thinking of God's grace to them when they greeted one another. "The way to heaven lies, not over a toll bridge, but

over a free bridge, even the unmerited grace of God in Christ Jesus." The grace of God was the wellspring of all blessings from heaven and from each other. God's love and mercy toward them and the gracious ministry of His Son Jesus, had given to sinners free and unmerited favor in God's eyes and enabled them to deal graciously with each other when bitterness and harshness might normally be expected. Divine kindness, pity, love, mercy and compassion must be reflected in human relations. The memory of Christ's gentle dealings with sinners and enemies was kept constantly before the early Christians, as they expressed the hope that their conduct might show their deep desire to be Christlike. Paul's letter to the Ephesians repeats this blessing twelve times. Some, therefore, speak of it as "The Epistle of Grace." Grace must be the foundation of true Christian living. Grace preceeds peace whether it be peace with God, or peace of conscience or peace towards our fellow-men.

*"For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to Thee."*

And peace: The full greeting of the Eastern Jewish world was "Peace be unto you." The Gentile was thinking of beauty in expression, form, surroundings, character. The Jew, driven by his enemies from grazing-land to grazing-land, was thinking of security. He longed in his soul for the day to come when wars would cease, when he could sit with his family about him under the shade of his own vine, with his possessions secure from danger of looting and his children content and safe. Cities were built to be rebuilt. Orchards were planted to be cut down. Even the great Temple at Jerusalem needed to be repeatedly raised from ruins. In momentary lulls, there was constant suspicion and fears of lurking dangers. His soul was troubled within him. "O Lord Most High, send peace."

Paul takes this deep longing and spiritualizes it. Christ has come to bring peace to the human heart. "Not as the world giveth give I unto you—my peace I give unto you." Many remembered Christ as One Who not only taught peace but also lived in a manner to possess peace within Himself.

The tempest was stilled. Angry mobs dispersed. Trying situations did not disturb His serenity of soul. Tomorrow was unknown but in "Take no thought for tomorrow," Christ leaves His peace as a legacy to each believer.

The Jew was thinking largely of external, material blessings. He wished security from war, safety from storms, absence of plague and pestilence, delayed droughts, and freedom from famines. Comfort, plenty, bounteous harvests, increasing herds, profitable markets, spelt peace. Paul tells them peace is inward and spiritual. It lifts its possessor above his possessions. Money no longer buys the pearl of great price. A Christian possesses himself through the grace of God which brings quiet, serenity of soul and satisfying spiritual happiness.

Sin is more disturbing than a lurking foe. Christ's forgiveness cleanses us from all sin and removes the irritant. Conscience can now sleep without restless anxiety and accusation. Sin makes us at war with ourselves, with society and with God. Christ frees us from all this. What calm is to the mariner tossed by storms; what a satisfying treaty is to a nation torn by war—that Christ is to the soul which is disturbed by the anxieties of an accusing sin-laden conscience. His peace becomes our peace. Christ's peace is "deep as the ocean, immovable as a mountain, absolutely untouched by outward disturbance and alarms, unruffled by fear of loss, or pain or death, rich in joy and hope and unchanging as the throne of God." Our peace rests in the soul, independent of our surroundings or possessions.

Do you see how tactfully Paul, whose ministry reaches Jew and Gentile, Roman, Greek and Palestinian brings together the greeting of all and shows them how much finer they can make it by recognizing that it comes from above?

DOUBLE SOURCE OF BLESSING.

From God our Father: The universal Fatherhood of God was recognized. Christ spoke of, appealed to, prayed to and explained God as being His Father. But God is our Father, too. He becomes the Father of all Christians through their union with Christ. Faith in Him admits us to adoption

whereby we can cry "Abba, Father." The Father is the fountain of all blessings, the Son is the dispenser of all blessings. Believers are the recipients of blessings.

And from the Lord Jesus Christ: "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." To living men He was Lord. Their lives had been yielded to Him in loving submission. To believers He was the Christ, the Son of the living God, equal with God and, with God, bringing grace and peace to the redeemed. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee."

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace and receive a continual supply of His grace and peace. Have you received these gifts from God?

As in nature one common influence from heaven manifests itself in a wide variety of flowers differing in color, fragrance and season, so the grace of God expresses itself in human lives in a multitude of acts, words, intentions and prayers.

"The sea enters into the rivers before the rivers can run into the sea," says Drelincourt. "In like manner God comes to us before we can go to Him; and heaven enters into our souls before we can enter into heaven."

III.

BELIEVERS' BLESSINGS

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."
—EPH. 1:3.

PRAISE TO GOD.

Blessed: Verses seven to fourteen comprise a hymn of praise almost unsurpassed in the letters of Paul. Some refer to it at the *Benedictus* of the New Testament. "Blessed be God" appears constantly. It was used by prophets, priests and kings as an expression of praise to God, Creator of the world, Chief of His people and One to be worshiped above all gods. The phrase, "blessed" never appears except when defining man's loving and adoring attitude to God for His mercy and kindness. It is an expression of our devotion toward the Lord. Blessings always come from God to man, never from man to God.

CHRIST'S FATHER OUR FATHER.

Be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: Paul, in a very tactful manner, is linking the God of the Jew with the heavenly Father of the Gentile; the Lord and Ruler of the Hebrew and Jesus Christ the personal Saviour of Christians. He goes a step further and contrasts Christ's relationship to God and our own. Christ, as the Son of God, is yet equal to His heavenly Father despite the fact that He repeatedly prayed to God, and appealed to Him for all authority. To the believer, God is the perfect One, Who inhabits eternity, Who, before the foundations of the world were laid, had planned our salvation and complete redemption. God never changes. The Bible begins with picturing God's character (Ex. 34); the New Testament closes with a parallel characterization (Rev. 21:6-8).

But the God that Paul would have us know was a God tender and compassionate, the God that Christ knew and constantly spoke of as "my Father" and "your Father."

GIFTS TO BELIEVERS.

Who hath blessed us: These two or three words introduce us to those seven blessings which Dr. Scofield refers to as the seven elements of the believers' possession. In a broader sense, we might speak of these blessings as unmerited acts of love and grace which God in His eternal purpose gives to those who surrender their lives to Him. The Divine Father sees us struggling with temptations and sends us blessings to help us rise above the temporal, material and physical. He bestows blessings upon all who are faithful to Him. Some blessings like the sun, the rain, the passing of the seasons, the division of day and night and the fertility of the soil come to the righteous and unrighteous. These seven gifts come to us through Christ. The believer claims them as his own and finds happiness in their possession; the unbeliever ignores them and lives apart from the happiness which their possession might bring.

NOTHING LACKING.

With all spiritual blessings: The Christian is not satisfied with merely living on a plane with the animals and sharing with them the satisfaction of food, warmth, light and rest. These earthly pleasures are elemental. Christ gave assurance that in material things we need "give no thought for the morrow." For He who clothes the lily of the field will not be unmindful of the necessities of His friends. But Paul knows that in addition to these physical requirements, there comes a hungering of the mind and spirit, satisfied only by the teaching of Jesus.

The mind seeking truth and a philosophy of life insuring peace, happiness and assurance of blessed immortality, needs Christ—and Christ alone. The Jew was constantly praying for material evidence of God's favor. Deuteronomy (28:2-14) gives the conditions to be met in obtaining national

blessings on the land which is to yield harvests and splendid herds of cattle; blessings expressed in profitable business ventures, peace, prosperity and the smiting of Israel's enemies. This is not enough.

Christ's Beatitudes, introducing the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5) leads us into spiritual realms. A healthy body, filled barns and honor are all insignificant and fleeting in comparison with the blessing which God promises those who are poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, they who hunger and thirst after righteousness, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. These blessings beginning on earth, extend throughout all eternity.

The word "all" describes the range of God's gifts. There is not a single real need of man which the Father cannot supply obedient children. Man can multiply his usefulness in life by possessing God's blessings, as a man accustomed to manual labor increases his usefulness by utilizing machines which give him the strength of twenty men.

FIELD IN WHICH ENJOYED.

In heavenly places: The phrase "in heavenly places" occurs five times in the New Testament (Eph. 1:3; 1:20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12). There is some doubt as to Paul's meaning. All will agree that the world is too much with us and that the blessings we crave must come from above.

The word "heavenly" undoubtedly links the Christian with Christ in heaven. After all we belong in heavenly places. We are but strangers and sojourners on earth.

In this world we are constantly under the influence of Satan and his cohorts. A follower of Christ needs protection from these tempting influences. He needs help. To encourage him in godliness, God keeps before him a vision of the heavenlies and constantly sends assistance from heaven.

Another interpretation of "in heavenly places" has the words refer, not so much to the blessings which come down

from heavenly places as the blessings which lift us into heavenly places. Our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20). But through Christ we have been chosen (V. 4), predestinated (V. 5), accepted (V. 6), redeemed (V. 7), instructed (V. 9), sealed (V. 13), and enriched (V. 14). We mount to higher planes of thinking and living. The discouragements which so provoked and worried us no longer seem of consequence. The body still has its old aches and pains, but we live, act and speak as citizens of heavenly places.

Macbeth thus addresses his wife's physician:

*"Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?"*

In Macbeth's heart was the craving which medicine could not satisfy and neither sufferer nor physician could remedy. Satisfaction could only be found in communion with God.

We ought not to lose sight of the fact that the man who is writing of the blessings which God was giving him in heavenly places was chained to soldiers and a prisoner at Rome. Under these trying conditions visions may be had. They came to Daniel and to the three Hebrew Children in the fiery furnace; Stephen saw them as he was being stoned by his persecutors; Paul was conscious of them in various imprisonments. There is no reason why we should not have these same uplifting experiences.

Someone sharing Paul's thought wrote, "Man created in the image of God and redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ, is too great to be limited to the narrow sphere of this brief life. He belongs in heavenly places."

PERSONAL CONDITIONS ON WHICH RECEIVED.

In Christ: We are to abide in Him Who is the Head, Root and Source of all life. The Spirit of Christ must flow into

us as sap flows from the vine to the branches. As branches receive this legacy, they blossom and bear fruit. Our union with Christ is to be equally vital. "I am the vine, ye are the branches." Our personality must be lost in Christ. In Him we are to "live and move and have our being." In all relationships we are to act, speak and talk as citizens of heaven. We cannot live without Him—breath of our soul, sunshine of our existence.

IV.

ELECTION

"According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." —EPH. 1:4.

THE MEASURE.

According: In this hymn of praise a measure is given us to determine the fulness of these spiritual blessings. Lest we forget God's part the refrain is repeated over and over after each statement of a new blessing. Here the measure of His blessing is according as He has chosen us. He has made us sons through Christ according to the good pleasure of His will (V.5). We have redemption through His blood according to the riches of His grace (V.7). He has instructed us in the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure (V.9). We have obtained an inheritance according to the purpose of Him (V.11). The believer's standing in grace gives him:

1. All spiritual blessings (V.3)—the measure being according to V.4;
2. Sonship (V.5)—the measure 5, 6;
3. Redemption (V.7)—the measure 7;
4. Knowledge of the mystery (V.8,9)—the measure 9,10;
5. An inheritance (V.11)—the measure 10-14.

OUR ELECTION.

As he has chosen us: Not according to our works, but with no merit of our own, God has elected us out of fallen mankind to love Him and be holy. In the Old Testament, Israel was God's chosen race, in the New Dispensation those who believe and love Him are chosen God's elect. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" (I Pet. 1:2).

"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth (II Thess. 2:13)." God has chosen us. We all like to be selected. I can still see a circle of laughing children playing a game. One in the center pointed to one in the circle who was it. How anxiously, with rapidly beating heart, I waited for the finger to point in my direction! First one on this side, then one on that side and finally I was chosen. What a thrill of happiness! God has chosen us. None in the game of life are overlooked by His loving selection. How happy this thought should make us and with what abandon our task should be performed!

CHRIST THE DOOR.

In him: The notification of our selection to the high office of a son of God and joint-heir with Christ came to us through a personal representative sent from heaven. To have been chosen would have been sufficient, but to have a personal ambassador from heaven come to earth to give us this loving invitation how wonderful! Christ delivered His message in person during His days on earth. Now He speaks through the voice of His followers. He uses our lips. Have you delivered your message? Have your friends known through you that before the foundation of the world God chose them? That He invites them to come to the Cross and accept the redemptive work of the Lamb of God? To die with Christ by putting away the carnal nature and live for Christ that some day they may also rise with Him in glory? "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture . . . I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:9, 10).

OUR SALVATION GOD'S FIRST THOUGHT.

Before the foundation of the world: Before the formation of the heavens and the earth, the Divine mind considered man's needs and planned to send Jesus to die for the sins

of the world and planned that His Son by the power of His holy life, the nobility of His teaching and the triumph of His principles, should draw the whole world unto Himself. God not only considered the earth, the heavens, creatures of the air, water and soil, He also provided for man's minutest requirements. He did not form man and set him adrift to shift for himself through various stages of his evolution and enlightenment. The mind of the Creator knew from the beginning of time that the church would be the living body of Christ and that we could be members of that body. Nothing is unprepared in God's dealings with mankind. A great mysterious system and plan is being controlled by a master-mind.

Who could ever study the processes of the opening of a single bud without crying out to God in acknowledgment of His matchless wisdom and foreknowledge? None can praise God as the believer whose sins have been washed away, by the blood of Christ. The wonder of this provision has caused some to repeat over and over in their hearts, "Blessed Lord, blessed Lord, blessed Lord!" The consciousness of that from which they have been saved, the guilt which has been removed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot; who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (I Pet. 1:20), brings such joy and peace. "Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:33).

Some one has spoken of these words as being Paul's Genesis. "In the beginning, God chose us. In the beginning, was written the decree for our complete salvation." Has our faith appropriated this gift of God?

A DIVINE STANDARD.

That we should be holy: God is holy. From His followers He commands holiness. The word "holy" is distasteful to many. Holiness is about the last thing many want. Some bend backwards to keep from being too spiritual. Having religion is not always thought to be complimentary. Un-

doubtedly, some, in their zeal to live for Christ, lose the real picture of Christ's life. He lived among men and won their respect and admiration. The crowds who followed Him did so because He stood for something, and represented in His character and life what had not appeared in rabbis or those who claimed self-righteousness. The holiness of Christ caused sinners to wish to touch the hem of His garment. This is the holiness Christ wishes of us—a whiteness which has no discoloration. Grey sometimes appears white when placed with black. Christ's life is our standard of holiness—nothing less.

Holiness has been defined as an attitude rather than an attainment. Perfection can no more be attained in a moment than a seedling redwood can hope, in a year, to tower above the forest growths at its feet. Holiness may be an act of a moment. Perfection is a matter of a life and a death. The Ephesian church was no different from church groups today. There was much that could be criticised, but as you looked at the trend of their life they were willing to be led of God. They were willing to accept God's choices for them. They were willing to turn away from the old life and turn resolutely and completely toward the Light which was in Christ Jesus. They prayed "Forgive us this day" and frequently forgot to forgive. But they, like a long-distance runner pressed forward towards the mark of the high calling in Christ Jesus, mindful of the promise "that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him with fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:75).

"Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began (II Tim. 1:8,9)." An imperfect man may still be a holy man, if his life be turned constantly towards the light and he gives himself with complete abandon to his Lord, let him work out his salvation with fear and trembling, trusting in God alone.

A PERFECT OFFERING.

Without blame: "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet, now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouable in his sight; if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye have heard (Col. 1:21-23)." "Without blame" means without spot or blemish. The word was used frequently to describe a lamb fit for sacrifice. There must be no hidden illness or lameness or imperfection. That which was suitable for offering to the Lord could only be the prize of the flock, nothing less. What are we offering the Lord today? Do hidden imperfections or glaring inconsistencies mar the offering of our talent, time or wealth? The tithe must be honestly earned. The lips which sing His praise dare not be contaminated by the gratification of intemperate desires. Righteousness is a garment for the heart. It cannot hang unused during the week and parade itself in the family pew on Sunday. The church is to have no spot or wrinkle. It should be holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:27). Our life is to be free from hidden, secret vices and known envies, hard feelings, selfishness, unforgiveness, lusts of the flesh, and pride.

OUR LIFE REVIEWED BY GOD.

Before him: It is not sufficient to live so the neighbors will think well of us. Nor is it adequate to excuse our conduct and console our consciences by doing as well as might be expected, or in accordance with the standards of the community or state. The degree of our holiness must pass muster before the all-seeing eye of God which neither slumbers nor sleeps. Cain and Abel were asked to make sacrifices. Cain thought the requirements were unreasonable and something else would suffice. It was the act of sacrifice which counted rather than that which was sacrificed. Abel went under the assumption that God had a reason for asking for a certain sacrifice and he must carry out the plan in detail. Cain's sacrifice was rejected. Abel's was accepted. Cains and Abels

are still living. The Creator has given us a set of approved blueprints for life. How many workmen want to make adjustments to suit their convenience!

We are to be without blemish before Him. This places us on our mettle. I stood one day watching some Mexican Indians form their pottery and bake it over an open fire. The shape was attractive, the design interesting, the process unique. But the product was fragile and needed careful handling and packing. It was soft and easily broken. It satisfied the simple needs of the Mexican peon. On another occasion I stood before the kiln of a world-famous pottery in Cincinnati. The clay had been meticulously kneaded. The ovens had to be at the proper temperature. Every vase, like a painting, had its designer's mark on the base. When color and enamel were in place, the product was a museum piece. Standards were as near perfect as it was possible for them to be; science was at its best. In Christian living some operate with the easily satisfied standards of the Mexican Indian. God tells us that our lives must pass His observing eye. Our hearts must have the purity which comes from having been washed in the blood of the Lamb.

THE CERTAINTY OF ATTAINMENT.

In love: Divine love gives us our standing. It is Christ's love which has the enabling power to keep us as we ought to be. His love can make me what I want to be and what God wants me to be. "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. 5:2).

Duty is a poor prompter for sacrifice. Chafing is always present. Love knows no sacrifice in giving. Love beautifies gift and giver. Love is willing to use the last measure for the one loved. Our holiness is to grow in the sunshine of love. One morning while working in the Dana Bartlett Institutions in Los Angeles, a small Russian boy to whom I had become attached and who was loyal to me, brought me a gift of food as a token of his love for me. His hands were unwashed, the paper in which the gift was wrapped was torn and spoiled, but the heart which extended the gift

was clean. His eyes and face shone. What was I to do? Accept the gift, then excuse myself and hope it might be possible to delay until the boy had gone before throwing the gift away? There was only one thing to do and that was to smilingly take the offered package, open it and eat in his presence the steaming unleavened cake which he had baked with his own hands and hurriedly brought to me. Our gifts to God must frequently appear to Him to be like those soiled cakes of the Russian emigrant boy. God sees the love which prompts the gift and accepts our offering. Our gift must be our best and be given with unadulterated affection.

We stand before God holy and without blame. Are these standards too high? Not with Christ helping us to attain them. He is equal to all our needs. The other day the New York Power and Light Company, in mailing its bills, included a slip telling the householder it was in a position to supply all demands for heat, light or power. Christ comes to us and says, "I am sufficient for every need; I am the light of the world." "And ye shall receive power" to endure, to forgive, to overcome and to live.

V.

SONS OF GOD

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."
—EPH. 1:5.

SET APART.

Having predestinated: Verse four explains Jehovah's activities as God and His purpose to have all His followers holy and blameless before Him. We now see His activity as Father and the provision He has made to adopt those who will be members of His family.

Predestination has always been a subject for controversy. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton presents the angels in heaven as engaged in discussion concerning the mystery of God's foreknowledge, man's free will and effectual calling. Our forefathers became bitter in their various interpretations of this will of God. Preachers avoid sermonizing upon the subject. Paul's meaning surely was that, from the first, God had a vision of a group of followers who would share the mind of Christ and be guided in their ordinary contacts by the spirit and teachings of the Son of God. God foreknew the white life which Jesus was to live on earth, and planned that the nobility of that life should inspire others to follow in His steps. Christ was to be the firstfruits. Loyal and faithful disciples were always to be found who would pass on to others the light which had come to them and call them to unselfish service in the name of Christ. God knew from the beginning who these were to be and in the fulness of time called them to be witnesses for Him.

"Predestinated" has been translated "having foreordained, having previously determined, having set apart beforehand, having set our names down for a blessed future, having knowledge of who we are and when we were to be and what

we were to become." The Creator did not form a world and shape human creatures to set them adrift to work out their own destinies. He did not create and then wonder what was to be done with the creature of His genius. He knew before the beginning why, and how, and when.

"Whom he did predestinate them he also called" (Rom. 8:30); "we are called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:29); "hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory" (I Cor. 2:7); "he appointed seasons and the bounds of human habitation" (Acts 17:26). "Herod, Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:27,28); "and when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48); "we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory" (I Cor. 2:7). These passages tell us plainly that our lives are not consigned to a blind, impersonal, mechanized destiny to which we must helplessly resign ourselves. A loving Father has mysteriously chosen unworthy sinners to inherit the blessings of heaven. His love has selected us to be the beneficiaries of His grace. Having predetermined what shall come to pass, He will carry out His purposes. Addressing a group of His disciples Christ said, "I have chosen you out of the world" (John 15:1a).

EVEN ME.

Us: Four times in these three verses Paul uses the pronoun "us." God has blessed us; He has chosen us before the foundation of the world; He has predestined us to be sons; He has accepted us. Who are included in the word "us"? Is Paul referring to a particular number of the Ephesian Christian group or is he generalizing and including all who are followers of Christ? Undoubtedly he is thinking of the church which is the body of Christ and the whole family of God. When reviewing the lives of great Biblical characters it is easy to see they knew they were called by God

to lead Israel through a crisis in their national life. Moses was called to take Israel out from bondage and direct their march through the wilderness. Solomon was called and predestined to erect the beautiful temple as a permanent place of worship after the moving tabernacle of wilderness wanderings had performed its function. Paul was needed to tell the Gentile of their inclusion in the family of God. Through faith the doors of heaven opened for them.

But "*us*" with our little life, known to so few, understood by less than the immediate family group,—but *my* life. Has God from the beginning of time called *me*? Has He a great purpose for even *me*? Yes. What a blessed hope is this! God knows all about me. Christ died for me. He suffered on the Cross for me. His blood was shed for my sins. He follows my steps and waits to help me over the rough spots and guides my feet. Am I living according to this high privilege? Jesus walks with me as He did with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

A SON.

Unto the adoption of children: In a certain sense, all men are children of God. He yearns for them with all a father's anxious thought, but like prodigals we may live apart from Him and be wasting our lives. "Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?" (Mal. 2:10). The Jews claimed God as their heritage. "Israelites to whom pertaineth the adoption and the glory and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God and the promises" (Rom. 9:4). John gives us Christ's promise that "as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12). Paul claims for the Roman Christians and for himself this sonship. "But ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father; the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs . . . with Christ" (Rom. 8:15-17). Christ was sent "to redeem them that were under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:5). We

belong to God's immediate family. First, we were chosen by God and then we were adopted into the family receiving all the special privileges of ready access, communion with God and the rights of inheritance common to sons. Adoption gives us all the rights and privileges of a son who by birth receives and bears the family name. In a sense, Christ was God's only begotten Son, but by adoption we are all His sons. The church is a company of sons through Christ. It was the heavenly Father's pleasure to surround His only Son with a multitude of others whom He could love and delight in as a parent takes pleasure in a family group gathered about him.

Sonship has two aspects in the New Testament. The first is generative. A complete change must take place in our natures; character must be Christlike. A new birth is essential. Dross has no place in the refined life. We need to be holy and without blemish. The second is a legal conveyance of the rights of inheritance to those so changed in heart and life. Our salvation is a gift. Our filial position and privileges are transferred relationships from God to unworthy sinners outside the pale of His circle. God's sons are holy, and holy men are His sons. Adoption therefore involves a change of nature as well as of relation. Many desire the privilege of sonship who are not willing to pay the price asked of Nicodemus. The new relationship necessitates a new heart. "Ye must be born again."

Sonship has many privileges. It involves possessions, protection, shelter, education, training, a share in the father's house, constant access, the benefits of His wisdom, experience, counsel and fellowship. Sonship also has many duties. A son has an obligation to be obedient, trusting, grateful, loving and give honor. As sons of God, have we prayed for its privileges, have we assumed its obligations, do we joy in the cross of daily duties and loyal service?

Paul speaks of our standing as sons through Christ as being a relationship established in the mind of God from the beginning of the world. He also tells us of a future

completion of the rights of sonship. "Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body (Rom. 8:23)."

Summarizing, sonship is a free gift from God. "I will receive you, and be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty (II Cor. 6:17, 18)." Sonship is dependent upon Christ: "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons (Gal. 4:4,5)." Sonship is made possible through faith in Christ. "For we are all children of God by faith in Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:26)." "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God (Rom. 8:14)." Our faith must be appropriated; adoption brings us into communion with the Father. "Ye are Christ's and Christ is God's."

OUR STANDING POSSIBLE THROUGH CHRIST.

By Jesus Christ: The Father works through the Son. Heaven was revealed through the Son. How much clearer is our knowledge of God and the steps needed to prepare us for eternity because of the Sermon on the Mount and the life of Jesus! "God . . . hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son (Heb. 1:1,2)." Christ's redemptive work is the price paid for our sonship. "God sent forth his Son . . . to redeem them that were under the law and that we might receive the adoption of son (Gal. 4:4,5)." God's own Son left heaven and suffered cruel death upon the Cross in order that we might be joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17), and inherit spiritual blessings. Through Christ as a channel flow these blessings to us. When God gives, He sends His gifts through Christ. When we become sons it is through Christ that we are related to the Father. The Jews departed from the commandments given them. Idolatrous worship claimed them. God pleaded through prophets for a return to the faith of their fathers. Through Christ, God is tenderly calling His people back to Himself.

UNTO GOD.

To himself: Our heavenly Father is not only the Author of our redemption, He is also the End of it. We belong to Him. We are His very own to glorify, serve, praise and enjoy forever. God's whole purpose in offering us sonship is to bring us back to Himself, to true, perfect and adoring fellowship with Him. Through the mediatorial work of the Savior, God would bring sinners to repentance, break the fetters of evil habits, restore lost relationships, lift the lost from the gutter to a place at the table with Him, and bring into hearts hungering and thirsting, after they know not what that satisfaction which peace of God alone furnishes. What matters then the heartaches of life? Suppose the burdens are heavy. Perhaps the way is dark. Tomorrow may be unknown. Plans may miscarry, sickness and pain may be our lot, but some day—glorious hope!—we shall stand in God's presence and in the glory of that moment we shall forget the agonies of climbing the height. Keep this fact always in mind. We are being prepared to stand in heavenly places where we shall live with God. Press on toward the goal.

GOD'S INTENTIONS.

According to the good pleasure: The process of reaching the heights is described. God's every thought and act which is good and wise is for our happiness. Faith must believe that He is right and that time will tell. How many steps lie between raw material and finished product! Many a mile and numerous processes lay between cotton growing on a bush and the beautiful dress gracing a charming daughter. God places between the cradle and grave years of cruel testing and trial, but His eyes are ever watchful, and His thought is always for our good and happiness. Though we cannot see the pattern by which He is working, let us have faith and trust Him Who knows the very hairs upon our head. "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight (Matt. 11:26)." What pleases God can alone be right and wise. So let us be content. A sovereign will, a Divine goodness, a heavenly Father's love is caring for us.

Glance for a moment at some of the promises which indicate His pleasure! "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom (Luke 12:32)." "It was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe (1 Cor. 1:21)." "It was the good pleasure of God, who called me through his grace to reveal his Son to me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles (Gal. 1:15)." "For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do for his good pleasure (Phil. 2:13)." God wants man to be lifted high. Shall any answer "No" or by selfish withholding of ourselves place handicaps upon this purpose? Let us give ourselves to the life purpose of letting God have His way with us, in all our days.

GOD FOR US.

Of his will: Paul longed, as every believer yearns, to see all humanity share the blessings of Christ fellowship. Yet in himself, he had no power to compel allegiance to Jesus. Sermons could be preached; every energy might be expended and yet converts might not accept or follow the Master's teachings. Our prayers dare not include less than the world. The glory of our task lies in the fact that it is not our will which is to be done; it is the will of God which is being carried out in current events. He has made us; He will open doors; He will in His own time and way touch the hearts of men to accept Him as Lord and Redeemer. That glorious, mysterious and secret will of God is a guarantee that He Who has begun a work in us will complete it.

VI.

THE GLORY OF OUR ACCEPTANCE

"To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." —EPH. 1:6.

GOD'S GRACE.

To the praise of the glory of his grace: God is to receive the adoration and praise due Him. As adopted sons realizing the wonder of our standing before God through the mediatorial work of Christ we sing His praises and glorious graciousness. The abundance, fulness, richness, boundlessness of His gifts toward us are not the shallow, limp, indifferent expressions of divine mercy our conduct deserves. His grace is full and flows from a heart to do far above what we could ask or think. God's grace is splendid and significant.

Paul makes no effort to reconcile or harmonize election and foreordination with the exercise of a free will. He simply states that we are saved by grace and not by ourselves. As sons of God we have been elected to holiness; through Christ we have been foreordained to be sons of God. Both are the results of God's loving kindness. "He will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." God has done all in His power. Let us follow. The seed cannot say, "I will become a pear or a peach." The seed must be what its original nature made it. The sun, soil and gardner may develop or waste nature's provision. In some ways I am free to choose for myself what I may become, but I must work with God. He has given me a nature fit for heaven; I must co-operate with Him and work out in me the Divine purpose. As Dr. Lyman Abbott expresses it, "I am not a flute, out of which He can draw what music He likes; I am not plastic clay which He fashions into what He likes; I am not a movable type which He puts where

He likes. There is a power in me, and that power must work with Him or there will be no music in my life, no Divine figure wrought, no Divine truth printed."

WE ARE ACCEPTED.

Wherein he hath made us accepted: Having spoken of our adoption by Christ and the love and grace of God which made this step possible, Paul would make it clear that God was the One Who from the foundation of the world planned our salvation should be through Christ. Christ by His great love would draw us to Himself. He freely bestows on each the privilege of being the son of God. The literal meaning of the word "accepted" is "engraced." This word is found only twice in the Bible; here, and in Luke 1:28, where the angel appeared to Mary says, "Hail, thou art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women." The same loving God which honored Mary would recognize us as children and shower His blessings upon us. Weymouth translates this phrase "He has enlarged us or beautified us." The privileges of sonship are gifts of God which are ours for the asking. "Ask and ye shall receive."

A CHERISHED SON.

In the beloved: God frequently speaks of Christ as His beloved Son. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased (Matt. 3:17)." At the moment of transfiguration when Christ was leaving the disciples and when the glory of heaven was surrounding Him, the same word describes the Son. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him (Matt. 17:5)." It would be natural to expect any father to speak of his only son as beloved, or the one greatly treasured. What made this term particularly appropriate to Christ was the obedience of that Son, His willingness to leave heaven, live among men, suffer at their hands and die for mankind. "He became obedient even unto death (Phil. 2:8)." All believers trusting in Christ and becoming through Him, sons of God, have every right to

expect God will exhibit the same love toward us children by faith that was shown by Him for His only begotten Son. If we will accept the forgiveness offered through Christ, if we will follow the example of holy living set by Christ and turn from known sin to righteousness giving praise and glory to Him, God will bestow upon us His grace, beautifying and enlarging us with the same splendor which made Christ radiant. It is only through an intimate relation with Christ that the blessings of God can come to us.

VII.

THE FORGIVENESS OF OUR SINS

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

—EPH. 1:7.

CHRIST MUST BE ALL.

In whom: Having been accepted, Paul now leads us into a more detailed description of the blessings of sonship, but he stresses the fact that Christ is the Channel through which every good and perfect gift flows from God to us. All of us are secure if we attach our life, our interests, our whole selves completely to Him. Our love for Christ opens the doors through which God's love comes to us. We cannot be close to God until we are first united to Christ. God intended that Jesus should bring us to Him. He spared not His own Son "but delivered him up for us all (Rom. 8:22)."

THE GOSPEL GIVES FREEDOM.

We have redemption: Israel was only partially redeemed. In Christ our redemption is complete and everlasting. We might properly put the article before redemption—"in whom we have *the* redemption." This is the great redemption, the real redemption. Compared with it all other redemptions are trifling. The Bible makes it quite clear that because of sin we are condemned, enslaved, and powerless to help ourselves. Habits get such a firm hold upon us that we are no longer our own masters and there is no power within ourselves or strength outside of ourselves to free us from sin's bondage. Christ alone can bring this redemption.

The words "we have" are short and simple, but rich in meaning. A single Greek word expresses what we possess when we are accepted by God through Christ. "Hope we have as an anchor of the soul (Heb. 6:19)." "We have such

an high priest (Heb. 8:1)." "Your body ye have of God (I Cor. 6:19)." "Having these promises—let us cleanse ourselves (II Cor. 7:1)." "Having boldness to enter . . . let us draw near (Heb. 10:19)." "He that hath the Son hath life (I John 5:12)."

Redemption suggests deliverance from sin, Satan, and death, the penalty for sin. It suggests freedom—a pardon has opened the doors of the prison. It suggests a complete release by the payment of the ransom price. It means that a person enslaved by habits which have separated him from God is freed from their power and is restored to the loving care of a heavenly Father. It means that a sinner, instead of standing condemned in a Divine court of justice is a free child in his Father's home, enjoying all the privileges and affections of a son. The blood of Christ is the price of this redemption.

It was a high price to pay and yet, a price which Christ willingly paid once for all, for all creatures, to acquit them of all their transgressions. By the single sacrifice of Himself on the Cross He once and for all redeemed us for all eternity. Therefore our standing before God is that of a rescued son redeemed from the penalty, the guilt, the condemnation and the power of sin, delivered from Divine wrath through Christ. "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold from your vain conversations received by traditions from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ as a lamb without blemish and without spot (I Pet. 1:18,19)." "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and give his life a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28)."

Redemption includes not only the change in our condition which we speak of as "justification," but also the change in our character called "sanctification." "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed (I Pet. 2:24)." "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These

things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee (Titus 2:14,15)."

Redemption does not promise freedom from future sins. Its final purpose is to ultimately draw us from all sin and present us before the throne of God. This redemption is thus a continuous process. Every day we need His cleansing touch, and pray for the forgiveness of transgressions. The Lord's Prayer impresses this necessity. Christ is the One to whom we must come. There is no other way. We can't be merely active in our service for others. A multitude of charities is no substitute for the redemption of Christ. No humanitarian enterprise, no generous gift or sanctified life of service can substitute for that which Christ alone can do. Any breaking of God's eternal moral law carries with it a penalty just as breaking the physical law of gravity carries ruin with it. Blood shed on the Cross averts this ruin and releases us from the power of sin and a punishment which is real and beyond escape. Our redemption is the only means by which we can be acquitted and freed from the guilt of past sins. "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth, to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus (Rom. 3:22-26)." We have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, "being justified freely by his grace (Rom. 3:24)."

CLEANSING BY THE BLOOD.

Through his blood: The blood of Christ is the purchase-price of our redemption. The Cross upon which He suffered has always been a sacred symbol; but the blood of Christ is more important than the Cross. The Gospels differ in their accounts of our Lord's life. The details of the various

incidents of His life vary, but the closing of His life and the scenes which lead to the Cross, bring remarkable harmony. All describe the shameful improper trials, the unjust accusations, the insults, the unjust scourging, the mocking crown of thorns, the ensuing jibes, the final thrust of the spear, and the shedding of Christ's life-blood that sin might be removed. It was the blood shed on the Cross which was the great factor in the growth and spreading of the church. The blood of Christ symbolizes the life willingly sacrificed that the world might be saved. There is power in the blood.

*"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains."*

The shedding of blood was no unusual occurrence. From the beginning of time, sacrifices have been offered to win the favor of a god whose laws have been broken. Savage tribes sacrificed the blood of innocent women and children and human victims to appease offended deities. As the human race became more enlightened, the blood of animals and birds was substituted as being symbolically sufficient for the intended purpose. "For it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul (Lev. 17:11)." The sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, however, differed from the sacrifices of heathendom and Jewish sacrifices in that it was not only life given for life, but it was also life given in the same kind. Christ possessing the same flesh and blood as man, gave both for those for whom He sacrificed. The Old Testament sacrifice used the life of an innocent victim. In the sacrifice of Jesus, the sinless body of Christ was sacrificed; a body as without blemish or spot of sin as any animal brought before the altar was free from any physical defect, but a life worth infinitely more than the life for which it was offered.

The New Testament writers appreciated the importance of the blood of Christ in its appeal to those to whom they were preaching. It was startling for an innocent man to assume responsibility for the guilty. No philosophy of life

would call for such a sacrifice. No other religion offered such to its followers. Paul writing to the Roman Christians mentions Christ as the unique example of a willing loving, perfect sacrifice. To the Ephesians he writes, "Those who believe in him are redeemed through his blood." He reminds the faithful in Colosse that the blood of the Cross brings peace and tells the church at Corinth that the Lord's Supper is a communion of the blood of Christ. John emphasizes the blood which cleanses from all sin; heaven sings, "He hath redeemed us by his blood." They in glory are clad in spotless white because "they have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb." This blood cannot be diluted or altered; it is life.

The spirit responsible for heroic sacrifices in missionary fields has been attributed to the absolute abandon with which missionaries give themselves to their tasks to prove worthy of the sacrifice made by Jesus for them and the world. Nothing else can account for the zeal with which they penetrate dense jungles, face cannibals, brave dangers of all sorts, live lives of solitude and isolation from their friends, suffer all manner of disease and count themselves fortunate to have the privilege of dying in a lone corner of the world. The blood of Christ is the heart of Christianity. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God (Rom. 3:24,25)." "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over that which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28)." "And without shedding of blood is no remission (Heb. 9:22)." "Ye were redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (I Pet. 1:18,19)." "The blood of Jesus Christ . . . cleanses us from all sin (I John 1:7)."

Christ, when instituting the first Lord's Supper in the upper room to those responsible for the success of that offensive to be carried throughtout the heathen world, gave

this message referring to His immediate death on the Cross. "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins (Matt. 26:28)." It was this which caused the elders and those who were redeemed to sing, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation (Rev. 5:9)." The blood of Christ represents the ransom of our guilty hearts and the ratification of the covenant made from the beginning of God's relation with man. There is no other way. But one redemption has been given to man. The Jews thought that they might find another way. They did not properly value Christ. A great many, today, are making the identical mistake and seek to improve Scriptural methods. To make the Bible attractive, they abbreviate it, taking selected pages which they speak of as being the heart of Scripture. If this process continues, the short Bible will be the shorter Bible and the shorter Bible the shortest Bible. Finally, little will be left.

Christ said that not one tittle should be omitted. It takes the whole Bible to give a complete picture of the preparation made for His coming, and to describe in detail the purpose of that coming. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death (Rev. 12:11)." "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation (Rev. 5:9)."

RELEASE

The forgiveness of sins: The forgiveness of sins is assured by the sacrifice on the Cross. It is the one thing sinful man wants to be certain is his religious possession. The original word for "forgiveness" is judicial. It suggests deliverance from punishment merited from an act of sin, rather than deliverance from its future power. The Christian's forgiveness does not deliver him from the power of sin, so that, once forgiven, he remains beyond temptation or sin. It does,

however, without any merit on his part, or without any good work by him, exempt him from the punishment which is a just penalty of law. For example, a father wants to forgive a son for breaking a rule which is understood by both. He is apt to withhold his forgiveness if the son intends to continue defying parental authority and proceed in wrong doing. If the son is sorry for the mistake which has been made and is anxious to change his course of living, the father will gladly forgive the wrong. The forgiveness of our heavenly Father is more perfect than any earthly forgiveness because it completely satisfies any claim against us, cleanses us and removes possibility of any future punishment for that act. God can forgive, will forgive and does forgive. "Ask and ye shall receive."

"Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee." Christianity is the only religion which offers such freedom. Confucianism, Buddhism, or Mohammedanism know nothing of forgiveness or of redemption, delivering man from the punishment of sin and from its guilt. God alone brings David peace. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." The blessing of forgiveness offered the Christian tells of restored fellowship with God. Any believer who truly repents and confesses his sins; any man, woman, or child who is willing to do that which is right and pleasing in the eyes of God, can possess this forgiveness. It is positive and personal. This will not mean that having received pardon, he neglects the work of the Master. His joy over what has been done for him and his changed heart, will express itself in wholehearted endeavor to help bring God's kingdom on earth. The person who possesses true wisdom would flee from sin, or having sinned, would ask forgiveness for that sin. He could not willingly live in sin or unforgiven sin.

Paul, seated in his prison cell, reviews his life and constantly absorbs new wisdom and understanding from above. He now saw what he did not see on the Damascus Road, that the good news which Christ came to tell was really the forgiveness of sins. How aching hearts longed for this hope! Paul was unselfish with the news so apparent to him.

He told all he met and urged them to tell others, that Christ offered forgiveness. There was no other way of finding righteousness except through Him. Isaiah having received forgiveness cried, "Here am I, send me." It was a repentant and forgiven David who wrote, "Oh Lord open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise." Peter thrice denied his Lord and was restored into intimate fellowship with the One he had loved and wronged, before Christ in His final message gave the instructions, "Feed my sheep." The person conscious of shortcomings and need of Him, who desires to live after Christ's pattern comes daily to Him for forgiveness and that guidance which will bring the work of the day to a happy conclusion. "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." "To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins (Luke 1:77)." "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:47)." "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins (Acts 10:43)."

Forgiveness has been spoken of by someone as being an expression of God's trust in us. He sees in us something which we do not see in ourselves. He sees our lives marred by mistakes and hampered by sin. He realizes that if He can clear away these blemishes and remove imperfections there will be something beautiful, worth while and fit for a place in heaven. He knows what we do not know; that it is only the forgiven soul that is free and only the liberated soul which is worthy of being sent out on the work which He needs finished. The root idea of "forgiveness" is "sent out" or "sent forth." We are free from the bondage of sinful habits and use the freedom in glorifying God, witnessing before others to the change in our passions, appetites, and life.

ALL SIN FORGIVEN.

The word "sin" in its original meaning indicates "falling out of the way, a lapse in conduct, a misdeed or trespass." The forgiveness of sins, by the blood of Christ covers the

whole category of sin; one sin or any degree of sin. "Who is delivered for all our offences (Rom. 4:25)." "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins (Acts 10:43)." "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38)." "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2:14)."

MEASURE OF REDEMPTION.

According to the riches of his grace: The measure of our forgiveness is according to the riches of His grace—there is no lack of abundance, no grudging sharing. Paul frequently uses the word "riches" to define Divine grace and gifts. Glance for a moment at the following: "The riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering (Rom. 2:4)"; "the richness of his glory (Rom. 9:23)"; "for there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him (Rom. 10:12)"; "O, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God (Rom. 12:33)"; "that in everything ye were enlarged by him in all utterance and in all knowledge (I Cor. 1:5)"; "for ye knew the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich (II Cor. 8:9)"; "being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness (II Cor. 9:11)"; "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19)"; "to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory (Col. 1:27)."

GRACE.

Grace is a free gift, an inheritance of God bestowed on those who have no grace or merit in themselves (II Cor. 4:15; Rom. 3:24; 5:17,20; I Cor. 15:10; Gal. 1:15; Heb. 12:24; 9:14; Gal. 1:20; Rom. 3:25; Heb. 9:22). Our inheritance is this gift of redemption flowing from the Divine Author

of life and goodness. Have we taken possession of it? The children of Israel were in bondage in Egypt. They needed to suffer before they could understand the pleasure which came with their liberation. Quite frequently we need to pass through the "valley of the shadow of death" before we draw near to Him. Suffering frequently opens the door to the riches of heaven. Thoreau beautifully expresses it when he writes, "Explore yourself on higher altitude; you may be a Columbus to yield new continents within you."

*"Whiteness most white, oh to be clean again
In mine own sight, in God's most holy sight!
To render through any flood or fire of pain,
Whiteness most white.
To learn to hate the wrong and love the right
Even though I walk through shadows that are vain
Descending through vain shadows into light."*

—ROSSETTI.

VIII.

THE ABUNDANT LIFE

"Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence." —EPH. 1:8.

OVERFLOWING BLESSINGS.

Wherein he hath abounded: This verse is very frequently omitted, yet it contains a most beautiful promise. His grace is given us in a measure pressed down, compact, and running over. Of course this blessing only comes when our hearts are open to Him, when we admit the Christ Who stands at the door and knocks. The latch is within. When we receive Him into our life as our Savior and determine to follow Him completely, we immediately receive this overflowing. *Toward us:* There is only one other place in the New Testament where this word is used; this is in Matt. 2:11 where the wise men from afar were kneeling before the Babe in the manger, and presenting their gifts. In the same way, the great Giver of every good and perfect gift, would present us all the gifts in His vast treasure store. Euclid uses this word "toward us" to denote a line used to meet another line at a certain point.

THE FORM OF GOD'S GRACE.

In all wisdom: There are two different interpretations of these next two clauses; one referring to God the Giver of wisdom. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God (Rom. 11:33)." The plan providing for redemption of our soul was from the very beginning of the world. Only foreknowledge of a Divine God and infinite wisdom could have provided complete emancipation for sinners. The second interpretation refers not to God but to us the recipients of this wisdom. God gives those who trust Him

a change of heart and life. Having been redeemed and possessing a new heart they possess all wisdom and prudence. The wisdom of Solomon was cold and lifeless; the teaching of Christ is vibrant with life, renewed life, joyous life and buoyant life.

Accompanying rebirth, God gives us spiritual insight and practical understanding. Sin has blinded our eyes. The forgiving heart sees the true nature of God. Christ referred to those who had eyes and saw not. The soul has eyes. These must have perfect vision to see the wisdom of God's dealings with us. The mind cannot grasp spiritual truth unless God has opened the soul. Scholars had struggled with the problem of life. They tried to find its purpose and justify it, to clarify man's relations to a higher power and discover the means of seeking the favor of a supreme being. How empty were their high sounding phrases and uncertain conclusions. The teachings of Christ answered these worn out and confused philosophies of life. Christ taught man to think clearly. His forgiveness gave poise, confidence and courage to stand. The early church was a thinking church. The conflict of righteousness and sin, the dealings of God with His creatures, the judgment pronounced upon those who broke Divine laws challenged thought and action.

Man is not truly wise who does not accept Christ as his personal Savior, for not until the mind of Christ is within him can he possess the desired light on his problems. As you contrast the proverbs of Solomon and the teachings of Christ, this truth is apparent—Christ gives all of us wisdom.

PRACTICAL WISDOM.

And prudence: Prudence is the practical use of wisdom. "A man of understanding hath wisdom (Prov. 10:25)." This Greek word for "prudence" is used only here, and in Luke 1:17, where the "wisdom of the just" implies sagacity, good sense and thoughtfulness. Prudence in reality is applying wisdom according to time and circumstances. The seaman realizes the influence of time and wind and utilizes this information in sailing out into the open sea and returning

safely to his harbor. The farmer studies the composition of his soil, experiments with tools and presently uses both tools and earth in the way which will produce the finest crops and profit to himself. Wisdom then is knowledge and prudence is the appreciation of that knowledge. Both words describe the highest intelligence and moral wisdom which follows forgiveness of sin. We repeat, wisdom can only come to man as his sins have been forgiven. The early church needed this wisdom. All classes of society were found in their gatherings. Conflicts were inevitable. Only as Divine wisdom was received could harmony be maintained. The safety of church councils lay in the possession of prudence. Paul was a glowing example of one who had tasted deeply from the source of all wisdom. May we follow his example. The success of the church depends upon it. "Christianity is the history of the manifold wisdom of God."

IX.

GOD'S PURPOSE

"Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself."
—EPH. 1:9.

THE BLESSING OF KNOWLEDGE.

Having made known unto us: The Christian does not share the ignorance of the unbeliever. When the follower of Jesus opens his heart to receive the truth, Christ opens the doors of heavenly wisdom and reveals to him the mystery of His will. All wisdom is not given to the Christian. The mind of God is never completely the mind of man, else man would be equal with God. But to man is given enough to assure him that God Who knows all is dealing lovingly and wisely with those He has made. Through faith we can trust Him for the unknown until we no longer "see as through a glass darkly." God's plan for the world is definite. The Divine Architect has minute and accurate blueprints for the universe. Our part in the workings of His creation is clear and concrete to Him.

The knowledge we receive of God is a growing and developing one. It is acquired by experience as the chemist learns his formulas; it is achieved by conscious effort as the student places his text before him and concentrates upon the problem of making the unknown known. It unfolds with maturity. He makes known to us certain facts when we give our lives to Him. We know Him Whom we believe. We know He is able to save us to the uttermost. We know there is no temptation greater than Christ's power to overcome. We know there is a place prepared for all those who long for His appearing. We know Jesus died for the whole world. We know that if we ask in faith, in the name of the Christ, we shall receive not necessarily what we ask, but something

infinitely better and more lasting. But there is to be no stopping point in our knowledge. We never arrive at the limit of our capacity to know God's will. As we walk with Him He reveals facts to us of which we were formerly ignorant. The two on the road to Emmaus were wiser men because they had walked with Jesus. As we live in His presence we are given wisdom from above to solve individual and family problems.

The purpose which God had in mind from the very foundation of the world is in the fulness of time, revealed to those who believe in Him through Christ. How much more we know than was known by the Jews of Moses' or David's day! How much has been revealed to the modern church that was unknown to the groups of Paul's missionary churches. How much do we know? The Bible is a living book. Do not take the attitude of some who believe the Bible to be the Word of God and yet are satisfied to believe it without knowing its mysteries. Biblical ignorance is not bliss. Our longing should be "that I might know him." Those who know Christ fully can praise Him and thrill over His goodness as those who know music and appreciate its beauties can be lifted above the trivialities of their earthly existences by the glories of the symphony. Jesus is the Key to the solution of all knowledge. God gives His children knowledge of His plans. They are interested in the building of His kingdom on earth. They have the mind of Christ. Possessing sympathetic understanding of Him and ambitions, it is given to the Christian to share the wisdom and glory of God. Does not a lawyer father confide in his lawyer son more than he would reveal to his merchant son or a son serving a term in prison?

THE MIND OF GOD.

The mystery of his will: The Bible is not always as definite as a time-table. The events of a normal life do not happen according to such a known schedule. There are many matters which puzzle us. We would like to pray and have all prayers answered. It is no wonder that Adam and Eve were tempted

by the offer to have their eyes opened. Satan is still offering to give firsthand information, and many are enticed by plausible possibilities only to find pain instead of pleasure as their reward.

The mystery of God's will is unknown to the sinner. It is better known to the one whose eyes have been opened to see in the Savior their only hope. The mystery of His will cannot be found except by revelation. Much that was a mystery before the Babe was born in a manger is less mysterious now. God's purpose to regenerate and redeem through Christ is no longer an uncertain or unknown fact. His will that the church should be composed of both Jew and Gentile is no longer an occasion of stumbling. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son; that whosoever should believe on him might not perish but have everlasting life." We cannot understand such love and bounteous provision for saving sinners, but we must accept or be lost. We know sufficient to cast ourselves at the foot of the Cross and give Him our all (I Cor. 15:51).

A mystery is not something unknown which never will be known. Nine times the Bible refers to it as something to be revealed (Dan. 2:18, 19, 27, 28, 29, 30, 47, 49; 4:9). "God has made known his will." "At sundry times and in divers manners (Heb. 1:1, 2)."

Glance for a moment at some of these mysteries which have been stated and revealed:—

1. God's kingdom will be rejected and not re-established for a long, unknown interval. The disciples asked Christ why He spake in parables. He replied, "Because . . . they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand (Matt. 13:10, 13)." Peter rejoices in the salvation of the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. Their salvation was a fulfilment of the promise made and now revealed (I Pet. 1:10-12).
2. The duration of Israel's blindness was a mystery stated in Isa. 6:6, 10 but revealed in Rom. 11:25.

3. The fact that all would not die but some would remain to be with the returned Lord was first stated as a mystery in John 11:25, 26, and revealed in I Cor. 15:51.
4. The great secret mentioned in Rom. 16:25, 26, is unfolded in Eph. 2:15, when the new man, at peace with God, is held before the believers as an habitation of God's Spirit.

Sin blinds us. Sin keeps us from seeing and knowing His will. It darkens our understanding. Confession of known sin, sorrow for it, sought forgiveness from the fountain of cleansing, and a confession of our faith in Christ and His ability to save, prepares us to receive that knowledge which is a mystery to the sinner.

God's will is never perfectly revealed to any. Some have greater knowledge than others. All can have more knowledge than that now possessed. "Seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you."

THE MEASURE OF KNOWLEDGE.

According to his good pleasure: Our enlightenment is according to the fulness of His love. It was not necessary for Noah to have exact information as to the duration of the water, its depth over the face of the earth, or the time of absorption and return to normal vegetation. God gave him dimensions for the Ark. The plan for the ship was scientifically correct; it would float, survive the storm and save its passengers. Amid the jeers of unbelievers, Noah assembled the timbers and brought the work to completion, thus saving himself and those ordained to have shelter with him according to the pleasure of God. The ungodly inhabitants of the land who thought they were living without God, died without Him, Whose displeasure they had incurred.

God has made heaven large enough for all mankind. Christ paid the entrance-fee. The Gospels extend a free invitation to be free from the bondage of sin. To all "called according to his purpose, all things work together for good (Rom. 8:28)." Why not seek the pleasure of a loving God and bask in the sunlight of His favor, appropriate to ourselves the treasures showered upon those who believe on

Him? The only qualification is that we shall be regenerated. Fellowship with God comes through discipleship and yielded lives.

It is not God's good pleasure that any soul should be lost or suffer eternal punishment. The lost have lost themselves. Their eyes have deliberately been closed to the path. Who ever heard of a climber trying to reach the top of the Matterhorn blindfolded? The very attempt challenges death in the depth of some deep crevice. Yet countless numbers are closing their lives to the influence of Christ and wonder why the way is hard and filled with fear and danger. God plans that your soul shall be saved. Is it? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

THE OPEN DOOR.

Which he hath purposed in himself: "Who has saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace (II Tim. 1:9)."

God's unswerving purpose for fallen humanity is the ultimate redemption of sinful men through Christ the Head of the church. Throughout all the ages God has been at work upon this plan, gradually unfolding and advancing it. Eternity has neither a beginning or end. God's work is not like man's work to be fulfilled in a score of years. Ages are needed. Time is on God's side. Time will see man's opposition weaken and end. Satan is working; God is also working. Each heart can and must choose between God and evil. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Every missionary going out to proclaim God's message has a part in proclaiming this redeeming purpose of God. Every pastor, every Sunday School teacher, every God-fearing home, every consecrated life is moving along a prepared course and carrying out God's plan.

God's purposes are being fulfilled now. Sometimes we are apt to feel that the world is adrift. Governments appear to be floundering. Right trembles over the possible outcome of moral contests. Greed, selfishness, graft, immorality, and

evil in all its hideous forms, seem to be enthroned securely. Have no fear. These occurrences and delays are part of the preparation now going on for glories to be revealed. The over-confident need to be taught that it is impossible to live without God. The day is not all sunshine. Right cannot always be seated on the throne. The finest development of us all demands that we cry from the depths of despair, "Lord, save us or we perish."

Remember this: God's purposes are not such vacillating tendencies as our thoughts. His determinations do not fluctuate from day to day. His will is not altered by every influence. God's purposes have iron. God's will has direction and forward movement. God's love is constant. From the depths of His nature, He loved us and wants to redeem us. Recall the perils of Israel's separation from Egypt. Their faces were set towards the Promised Land only to be turned again towards Egypt and its terrible oppression. One danger was past only to have another cloud of opposition develop to drive them frantically backward. But the day came when the sea was safely crossed. Egypt's hosts were under the face of the waters. God had kept His word. Life brings many setbacks, frequent disappointments, heartaches upon heartaches, but triumph comes at length. Why? Because God has purposed in His heart.

When discouraged, picture a rocky bluff washed by the seas! Wave after wave dashes itself upon those rocks. From the founding of the seas, those waves have pounded themselves upon those rocks; each gathering wave has hurled its might against that opposition. The rock is still there. The rock purposes in itself not to be shattered by every storm that blows. God's purposes are still there. Just because fragments of the cliff now and then fall, the cliff which has stood since the days of creation are not going to fall now. Sin displays its forces in elections, granted concessions and special privileges; right seems vanquished, but, God has purposed in Himself. Let time speak!

X.

CHRIST OUR HOPE

"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth, even in him." —EPH. 1:10.

HARVEST TIME.

That in the dispensation of the fulness of times: God has His periods of sowing as well as of harvest. Time is needed for that fulness of time when the blossom shall have matured into the harvest. In the fulness of time, the angels sang their song to the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks; in the fulness of time, Christ died on the Cross; in the fulness of time, the Holy Spirit descended upon those gathered with one accord in one place; in the fulness of time, the Word was preached to the Gentiles and the church began its strengthening ministry; in the fulness of time, the government will be put into the hands of the Son.

Before Christ, man failed. He chose to sin and worship in groves rather than honor the only true God before altars. But God determined to carry out His unalterable purpose to rescue and save the world. Each year marked a forward step in the process of redemption. In I Cor. 9:17, reference is made to the "dispensation of the gospel." We are in the gospel age. Its message is permeating the present age. No one knows how long this age will continue. Paul believed Christ might come soon. Each generation has cherished this longing. The signs of the times seem to indicate its nearness. It has not yet come. In the fulness of time, His glory shall appear.

The Son of God has become the Son of man. His sacrifice is a historical fact. The day of Pentecost has its known date. We are in the beginning of the end. Let us watch and pray lest we may be found wanting. Our readiness for

Christ's coming is more important than the date of His coming. No man knoweth the hour. How glorious is the knowledge that we may take part in the final reconstruction of events which must take place before the time is ripe for His appearance. Ultimately, in the stewardship of the ages, God will save through Christ. Each day brings us closer to God's crowning act of redemption.

CHRIST IS ALL.

He might gather together in one: Christ is the center of redemption. He is to be Ruler of the hearts of men. He is to be the Life of the church redeemed by His blood. "I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ (I Cor. 11:3)." "He is the head of the body, the church (Col. 1:18)." "Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power (Col. 2:10)."

The world is in conflict. Race is against race. No leader can bring the world together except in Christ. No other religion offers such a focal point. The disagreements of yesterday, today and tomorrow can find harmony only in Him. Some day this union will take place. It will doubtless have the fellowship of first-century Christianity. How much has been placed into religion which never appeared in the teachings of Christ. How complex a matter it has become. How simple the call given to follow, to love our neighbor as ourselves and to seek first the kingdom of heaven.

Church union is a dream of many devout church leaders. Our problem is to discard acquisitions of centuries of denominational heritages, to separate ourselves from the apparently indispensable ritual of modern devotion, to confess our sins to God and confess Him before men. We are apt to examine the Cross so closely that we miss the figure which hung upon the Cross; to see the risen Savior and miss the blood which flowed upon the wounded body broken for us. Back to Christ!

We must return to Christ before the world can be gathered to Him. This involves two fundamental actions. First, reconciliation with God. "Peace through the blood of his cross

(Col. 1:20)" and second, a removal of that which divides us from each other—"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts (Col. 3:15)." To accomplish this we must cleanse the fountains of our own loves before we can love our neighbor and lead him to Christ.

UNITY IN CHRIST.

All things: How impossible that seems to us! How far we seem from the goal—war, rumors of wars, hatred, child-labor, capital and labor in conflict, parties, greed, a machine age, coldness of heart in making capital surpluses, heartlessness in creating dividend-paying stock. Yet God has purposed to gather all things together in Christ. Man, who now deliberately exercises his free will to separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus, shall be gathered; man who now rejects Christ and chooses the world will come to Him; man who will not now be reconciled to God will return to the Father's house. All people will see in Him their all in all.

Scholars are already finding the Sermon on the Mount and the discourses of Jesus a consummation of vital truth. Truth can be found elsewhere. Other leaders have expounded wisdom. Their wisdom was that of men. Solomon's Proverbs are wise, but not "wise unto salvation to everyone who believeth." Movements emphasize truths and fade into oblivion. But Christ continues to stand out as no other teacher. Science and invention scraped the best of yesterday but Jesus remains still the Christ for today, Whose admonitions strike at the heart of man's necessities. He that follows Him still walks from darkness into light. Christ still claims to be the only answer to our needs. "Come unto me all ye . . ." Man never finds himself until he has found Christ. He lives on low levels until Jesus lifts him. In Him the world has ever, is now and always will find all that is needed for a Savior. Jesus saves.

FOUND IN HIM.

In Christ: "In the Christ"—there is no other Savior. If He is the only One, how great should be our concern that we are vitally connected with Him. When the cable attached

to a battery becomes covered with verdigris, power cannot flow with freedom. Then engine starts with difficulty and is sluggish. Get the hindrances and accumulations of self away. Be cleanly and directly related to Christ and your life will have power.

We are to give all of ourselves to Christ. What a discordant kingdom our bodies shelter. Desires, passions, imaginations, wills, consciences stirring up revolts and revolutions for supremacy. Christ takes all these conflicting emotions and soothes them into harmony. Instead of each member within us declaring war upon the other and lying in wait to bring defeat, Christ takes us, cleanses our thinking, brings the will into subjection, and centralizes our passions upon doing His will. Only when we find He is our all, can our bodies be a kingdom at peace with itself.

What is true of us as individuals is also true of our home. When we are married in Christ, both contracting parties being at one in Him; when all members of the household are one in worshiping Him and serving Him, there is fulness of happiness and peace. Each average household has in it about as many separating personalities as the individual heart has contrasting desires. The strong and the weak, the domineering and the meek, the selfish and the unselfish, the lustful and the spiritual, the intellectual and the physical, the bold and the timid, the talented and the ordinary, the Marthas and the Marys—what a grinding din of confusion, what irritations, what disputings, what angry words, what bitterness of invective, what hasty, costly happenings can occur in a home, where prayer is not in the family consciousness and where each and all do not call upon the name of the Lord to save them or they perish! The only proof of the security of a home lies in its dependence upon the unifying Spirit of Christ. Years will mellow the beauty and inspiration of the home founded genuinely upon Jesus.

Society as it is constituted cannot elevate itself by intellectual attainments. Study-clubs, discussion-groups, service-clubs, teas, social, fraternal, athletic, political, and business fellowships are all too weak to bridge the temptations of life and soothe its sorrows and losses. No code of ethics can keep

a person from stealing to "keep up with the Joneses," or save a family from the disgrace of an error in judgment. Jesus saves the soul. Until the soul is saved what matters the size of the flat, the make of the car, cotton or silk, the latest fashion or a plain garment? Society saves itself only as it gives itself to the task of the Master, doing collectively what He would be doing individually on earth. If Jesus cannot save the world, nobody can.

CHRIST GLORIFIED.

Both which are in heaven and which are in earth, even in him: On some crowning day "the elect angels in heaven (I Tim. 5:21)," and the regenerate "children of God scattered abroad (John 11:52)," will be united in Him. To this glorified Christ all powers will be subject. "Angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him (I Pet. 3:22)"; "and ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power (Col. 2:10)." Christ as Head of the church will unite all forces on heaven and earth.

Heaven is not all harmony. Angels because of rebellion fell. "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness (II Pet. 2:4)." Earth is a battlefield for Satan and his hosts. Ever since the Fall, Satan has been challenging the right of Christ to sway the motives of men. Death is the penalty of sin. "The wages of sin is death." But the day is coming when there will be a "new heaven and a new earth." Righteousness shall dwell there. A new body, a cleansed heart will have to be prepared for residence there.

To those, both on this side of the New Jerusalem and those on the other, Christ is all.

*"So, when together in God's light we stand,
Thee shall I take, thee truly as thou art;
No parting meeting touch of lip or hand,—
No baffled agony of heart to heart:—*

*But as twain fires that on God's altar burn
And in the fragrance of one cloud ascend,
To its ordained fulfilment each shall turn,
Welcome its long desire, and apprehend.*

*And never more shall there be I or thou
When we are one forever, thou and I,—
A dream,—a dream that we have dreamt ere now,
When we were lovers, love, in times gone by."*

—J. D. BATTEN.

XI.

THE BELIEVERS' INHERITANCE

"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." —EPH. 1:11.

THROUGH CHRIST.

In whom also we have obtained: The emphasis is on the fact that the Christian has actually received gifts from God. The mystery of the ages, imperfectly revealed until the fullness of time shall come, has been shared with Gentile believers. By faith they are heirs to the promises; by the power of God's Spirit a new heart may be created within them. This thought adds another stone to that pyramid which Paul has been carefully building. We have been chosen by God; we have been predestined before the foundation of the world to be partakers of His glory. Because of the death of Christ on the Cross and His blood shed for the remission of our sins, we are accepted by God; we have been adopted into the household of faith and become sons of God, and being sons, because of that sonship, we obtain an inheritance. All the saints who have yielded their lives to Christ and patterned their conduct by His example, have a share in this heritage. We do not receive this privilege of sonship, have access to God's possessions, receive the treasure of God's wisdom and knowledge or participate in His sanctifying Spirit, because we were made in His image, but because we become inheritors through Christ and in Him only.

THE HEIRSHIP.

An Inheritance: There are two different ways in which this inheritance has been interpreted. First, that God takes us for an inheritance and second, that we receive our inheritance from God. (1) Each believer becomes God's heritage. "The

Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance (Deut. 32:9)." "The Lord hath taken you . . . to be unto him a people of inheritance (Deut. 4:20)." This first interpretation implies that, if God is willing to take us and if God actually has every believer in His possession we can be assured of His protection, constant provision, and the supplying of our needs. We need never fear separation from Him for He is constantly safeguarding His treasure. (2) "And if children, then heirs; heirs with God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together (Rom. 8:17);" "The Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light (Col. 1:12)"; "Being justified by his grace we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:7)"; "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? (James 2:5)."

We receive daily benefits from our union with Christ. As we reach out, in our need, Christ answers our prayers in that fashion which will advance His glory and our destiny. But some of our inheritance—the best part of it—is still in the future. While heirs to a vast estate in our earthly life, we are like minors receiving only income from a principal. We enter into the fullness at death. We receive the entire principal in eternity, where there is no more disease, pain, death, curse, night or weeping to dissipate its complete enjoyment. Our heritage is enjoyed where the atmosphere will not be marred by sin, sorrow or the scars of this world. We shall then receive "an inheritance, not corruptible and undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you (1 Pet. 1:4)." What an incentive for useful, faithful Christian service—what vigilance lest we lose our inheritance! How earnestly we should strive till "we shall know as we are known (1 Cor. 13:2)" and receive that perfect rest and satisfaction when we awake in His likeness in a perfect world with Christ. "Where I am, there ye shall be also."

The redeemed of the living church which is the body of Christ, is also spoken of as His inheritance—"a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but

that it should be holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:27).” Believers are co-heirs with Christ, sharing the future blessing of heaven, the gifts of God’s Spirit, and the loving attention of an heavenly Father, but we are also heirs in Him. Christ is Himself a believer’s wealth, both in hope and in actual possession.

Let us turn again for a minute to the thought that God finds us for an inheritance. We seem unworthy of such an honor. We cannot understand how God with all the wealth in heaven, with all creative power in His possession, should have any desire for, or obtain any satisfaction from, the possession of believers as an inheritance. But the process of redemption brings Him a satisfaction—the same satisfaction that comes to a laborer who had taken crude material and by skill produces an object of art. Christ takes the soul steeped in sin, and transforms it by the renewing of our minds until the life becomes precious in His sight. “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1).” That which causes us to be dead to God has been removed by the blood of Christ. Those qualities within us which incur Divine displeasure and would warrant the loss of our inheritance have been removed. The way has been opened. Our standing before the throne of grace is perfect. We are adopted into the family of God. No longer need we look upon Him as a stranger or look with the eyes of outsiders.

We have the access of a son. The earthly parent is constantly giving his children evidence of his love. This affection expresses itself in planning future happiness, safeguarding health, laying by for the hour of need. Our Heavenly Father desires to kindle a spark of love within us and give forgiveness, peace, joy, satisfaction, trust and various blessings as a proof of the better and richer gifts which lie beyond the vale. God never lets go. Every experience should draw us closer to Him. Use the events of earth to mold character and make us fit for heavenly places. “We are his workmanship (Eph. 2:10).”

A great deal of repair work needs to be done before we will receive any enjoyment in heaven. Trials and temptations leave their marks upon us just as the wear and tear of depre-

ciating years weaken the structure of a house. The roof begins to leak, the foundation settles, walls crack, paint peels, and the once beautiful house becomes dilapidated. Constant supervision must be given to maintain its beauty and cause it to serve as the pleasant home for which it was built. God, the Master Workman, is constantly making checks upon our spiritual condition and keeping us from those processes of soul deterioration which lessen our value. Only by sometimes painful alterations, by repairing breaches of conduct can our body become fit for a temple of God.

A WAITING GIFT.

Being predestinated: Some versions translate "having been predestinated" as though this inheritance had been waiting for us from the beginning of time." When we come to that age when we can distinguish right from wrong, know the meaning of love, and recognize the Lord's right to our lives, we should give ourselves to Him and receive that treasure of being among God's elect which has been waiting for us. Paul is making clear to the Ephesian church and to ourselves that every detail of God's plan of redemption was worked out in the very beginning of time. Before creation, God planned to raise us to the high level of sons. God planned to enrich these sons with an ample inheritance. God planned that these sons should be strengthened by the wholesome fellowship of a church bound together in ties of loving unity and working for the extension of His kingdom on earth.

GOD'S UNSWERVING PURPOSE.

According to the purpose of Him: The Lord God not only planned these details of creation, but He has also sovereign will power to direct forces to accomplish His purpose. How different is man's struggling efforts, his high prospects, noble resolves, and low realities. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose (Rom. 8:28)." Here is an apparent inconsistency. Though it is God's purpose to give every living creature a bountiful portion of all His gifts, each

soul may reject His offer, live apart from His inheritance and Him, and miss the blessings which come from its possession.

HIS WILL.

Who worketh all things: God works everything. There isn't a thing beyond His eventual disposition and control. God is not a Ruler Who has to struggle for supremacy. Satan is working but time is on God's side. One translates God "enworketh" all things. God's power is proven by the changes which He makes in us. Religion is not mere contact. Religion is the enworking of God in the soul and in the church. "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith (Rom. 12:6)." There are differences of operation, but it is the same God Which worketh in all.

Are we giving God complete freedom to work in us, or do we see Him with our eyes but shut our hearts to His saving work? Are we like those who brought gifts to the early church but withheld a goodly portion?

God wants our all. Nothing less will satisfy Him or bring lasting satisfaction to ourselves. God worketh all things when we give Him all.

HIS COUNSEL.

After the counsel of his own will: The first chapter of Genesis records various acts of creation. Before each act the Word reads, "God said," but in the twenty-sixth verse of this chapter, reference to the Trinity is undoubtedly made: "Let us make man in our own image." This "us" and "our" undoubtedly implies a conference of the Trinity before man was formed from the dust of the earth. As a result of the council, a Divine resolve was made,—man, when created, should receive an inheritance of the grace of God. "When the fulness of time shall come," we, heirs of all the past, for whom God has been working, throughout all eternity, shall possess Christ. God knows the poor, frail, yielding will of man, facilitating according to the inclination of the

moment. He realizes how sin will destroy the power of man to fulfill His hopes of holiness and righteousness, so He determines to make provision for man's necessities in Christ.

Today, ask and receive.

"With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding? (Isa. 40:14)." "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure (Isa. 46:10)." "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say unto him, What doest thou? (Dan. 4:36)."

XII.

OUR HOPE IN CHRIST

"That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ."

—EPH. 1:12.

THE END.

That we should be: What is the purpose of all God's planning? For what did the Trinity consult? Why was the only Son of God humiliated in His earthly visit? Why was the sacrifice on the Cross necessary? Why was the Spirit given to man? He purposed that we should be saved. The goal of creation must be reached. The end of our conduct must fulfill the purpose of God.

Some wonder what is meant by the pronoun "we"; is Paul speaking merely of himself and the believing, justified Christian, or is Paul thinking in broader terms of the church which shall extend to the uttermost part of the earth; a church which shall consist of Jew and Gentile, both of whom are joint-heirs of the blessed Messianic hope fulfilled in Christ. Acts 28:28 has a broader outlook: "The salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles." The Pentecostal Church admitted into membership those saved by faith regardless of national or religious affiliations. "That we should be"—what? These words challenge us to let Christ have His way with us. It is always a regret that Christian experience did not come at an earlier age, so fuller knowledge and more opportunities for serving Him might have been ours. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures (James 1:18)."

TO PROMOTE HIS GLORY.

To the praise of his glory: No Christian has a right to praise himself. Any change in habit is God's work. We must be born again. When this rebirth is a reality all

praise is to be given to God. The saving of our soul adds to the glory of God just as Christ's life glorified God. "The light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them (II Cor. 2:4)"; "according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust (I Tim. 1:11)." These verses reveal to us the real purpose of God in saving us. We are God's possession and the church has been formed to acknowledge His sovereignty, to obey His will, to have our character possess concrete evidence of His goodness, grace and love in order that God may be praised, and onlookers may desire Him. We are to be living epistles of Christ, to be known and read of all men. We are to ascribe everything to His grace and nothing to our own merit. He is all and in all (Col. 3:11).

THOSE WHO HOPED BEFOREHAND.

Who first trusted: Here again is a difference of interpretation. Is reference made to Old Testament Jewish believers in Christ who inherited and shared the promise of His coming as the longed-for Messiah before the Gentiles after His coming believed on Him and followed Him; or, is reference made to the expectant attitude of all who believe in Christ from the time of His first coming to the time when He will come again and they will appear with Him in glory? The latter seems probable. Every believer, whether Jew or Gentile, who accepts Christ as Savior, contributes to the glory of God when Christ returns.

In Christ: Our trust in Christ Whom we have not seen, and our heart opened to Him, contribute to the glory which shall be Christ's when He comes again. The multitude of all believers, redeemed and resplendent, will be to the glory of Jesus. The Savior is our Hope. Through His sacrifice, we expect complete pardon. In His work as High Priest there is absolute purification. In His example, we have a pattern for effort looking for that day when we shall be perfect, even as the Father in heaven is perfect. "Christ in you the hope of glory."

Glance, for a minute, at some of the promises which are ours because of belief in Christ:

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost (Rom. 15:13).”

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (I Pet. 1:3).”

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope (Rom. 15:4).”

Thus concludes this first hymn of praise.

XIII.

SEALED WITH THE SPIRIT

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." —EPH. 1:13.

OUR SAVIOR.

In whom ye also trusted: Paul reminds Gentile readers that their faith in Christ gives them complete standing before God. The Jews of the Old Testament were the first to look forward expectantly to the coming of the Messiah. A few recognized in Him the long-sought Redeemer. Now, both Jew and Gentile may receive the gospel and trust in Christ for salvation. Both are sons and by faith possess that vital union with Christ which is one of the essential necessities of human experience. Christ, once the Hope of Jews alone, is ours. In Him let us trust.

OUTWARD CONDITION.

After that ye heard: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher (Rom. 10:14)." Hearing has its part in salvation. The gospel must be proclaimed, the mind must understand, but the ear is the receiving instrument which relays the message to the heart. All the gifts which God offers pass through the ear channel. Our ears should open our hearts and souls to the word of truth and salvation. After hearing the gospel we have an obligation to pass the good news to others. The sin of omission is quite as great as the sin of commission. Imagine Paul's guilt if after hearing the voice on the Damascus Road and after having received the gift of the Holy Spirit he had fled from answering the Mace-

donian call and had selfishly sought to retain for himself all the blessings of his new found Lord! The ignorance of others, the darkness in which they were living, the heavy burdens which they were bearing profited him and they should always prompt us to speak to others about Him. After you have heard Christ's invitation, what have you done with it and how are you extending it?

THE TRUTH.

The word of truth: The Greek word "logos" indicates only one ultimate and all-comprehensive truth. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth (John 17:17)." Christ sums up all truth. "He will guide you into all truth (John 16:13)." The word which we are to hear is the invitation to accept Him as our Savior, and the command "to go unto the uttermost parts of the world to preach the gospel." His Word is truth—we must be born again. "Being born again not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever (I Pet. 1:23)." "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures (James 1:18)." Christianity is not a story of imaginary heroes, mythical characters or a group of folk-tales. The apostles were real men, preaching what they knew to be the truth—that Jesus lived and rose again from the grave. Jesus was the Savior of the world. They spoke of what they had heard and seen and touched. Convictions were strong enough to be willing to suffer a martyr's death. Everytime we open the Bible it must be with the absolute conviction that every word in it is truth—the whole truth and nothing but the truth. No problem can ever face us, no doubt ever assail us, no need tempt us, but we can find in His Word the answer sufficient for that moment and every moment.

SAVING ME.

The gospel of your salvation: The gospel is properly interpreted "good news," because the whole message of the Bible is good news. Some students divide Biblical truth into

(1) the everlasting gospel, containing truth given by the Creator to fallen man, (2) the gospel of the kingdom relating itself to the message spoken by Christ and John the Baptist, and enfolded in the four gospels, (3) the gospel of God which was preached and taught by the twelve apostles, Paul and the group of Christians whose acts and utterances are given in the book of Acts and the early epistles of Paul, (4) the gospel of the grace of God founded upon the prophecies of the Old Testament, including truth given to the world after the resurrection and describing Divine graces and favors toward mankind, (5) the gospel of the glory of Christ given particularly in the prison-epistles of Paul.

Some may question so minute a classification. Paul was intensely conscious of what the gospel had meant to him and the peril from which it had rescued him. He was anxious that the same light should shine upon all who sat in great darkness. He would shout from every housetop, "Every despairing and lost soul has a way of escape. Jesus can save. The Holy Spirit gives power!" The story never became stale. His enthusiasm never cooled. The gospel which had saved him could save Jew or Gentile, barbarian and free. The gospel was intended for all of God's creatures. Has it saved you? "He that believeth . . . shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:16)." Ephesians 3:1 is a miniature of Paul's faith. A little bit longer, perhaps, than that creed of Paul which is given in the Book of Acts, "For I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me (27:26)," but a gospel that could save to the uttermost all that come unto the Father by Him.

The pronoun "your" is to be emphasized. This is the only occurrence of the word "salvation" in the Epistle to the Ephesians. The Gentile was delivered just as completely as was the Jew.

INWARD CONDITION.

In whom also after that ye believed: We spoke a moment ago of hearing as being the outward means of communication. Faith is the inward necessity for complete salvation. The gospel message must be received by faith and obeyed

by faith if a lost soul is to be redeemed. Paul rejoices that the members of the Ephesian church had believed God's Word and the testimony of the Scriptures. They accepted Christ as Paul had presented Him and their faith placed the seal of heaven upon them. Without this faith they could have had no communion with the Father. Hearing the word of truth is not sufficient. A great many listen and turn away in a moment of indecision. Faith expresses itself actively "Lord, save me lest I perish." This belief in Christ was absolutely essential in the early church and became so characteristic of followers of the Nazarene that they were commonly called, not only "Christians" but also "believers." The gift of the Spirit followed their belief, as on the day of Pentecost when three thousand believed and received power. It was customary for the apostles on their tours of visitation to ask (Acts 19:2) "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" The promised Spirit did not confine His activities to the day of Pentecost. "The Holy Ghost fell on them as on us at the beginning . . . for as much then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 11:15,17)." It would be well for each member of the church today to ask, "Have we received God's Spirit or have we merely believed?" After belief—God's Spirit with power.

A MARK OF OWNERSHIP.

Ye were sealed: These words undoubtedly refer to a custom still found in Europe and Asia of placing a distinctive mark upon one's possessions, a stamp of validity upon documents, a protecting mark on goods lest they be stolen, a sign of ownership when the purchase price has been paid. Paul had doubtless witnessed seals along some wharf of his boyhood city when strange merchants had brought cargoes to port, and, after bartering for their sale, and receiving a satisfactory offer, had marked the consignment with the particular emblem of the new owner as a protection against loss and theft. Paul sees in this an illustration of the sinner bought with a price, becoming a son of God and receiving the mark of the Holy Spirit as an evidence of belonging completely to his Divine

Lord and Master. The seal, in other words, is God's stamp on the believer, setting him apart as an evangelizing agent to spread the gospel. Just as the seal was pressed into the soft wax, prepared gold, or plastic clay to leave its impression, so God's finger touching the sinners's heart and mind leaves indelibly written there the will of God. Love in the heart of a believer, a passion for souls and a persistent desire to work out his own salvation, are evidences of God's touch upon his life. Do we bear this mark of God in our hearts and consciences? The Old Testament Jew followed a mere ritual; the New Testament Christian has the Holy Spirit as a characteristic mark of a son of God.

"And hereby we know that he abideth in us by the Spirit which he hath given us (I John 3:24)."

The seal was by no means an unimportant and useless thing. When a seal is placed upon a private paper or a government document it immediately changes the character of that paper. In the Bible, a seal signifies (1) a finished transaction, an official statement, or the validity of some statement or act. It ratifies an agreement as when an engagement ring is given as a pledge of marriage and dower. "But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them. Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel; for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and shall be in rest, and be quiet, and none shall make him afraid (Jer. 30:9,10)." "I have glorified thee on earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do (John 17:4)." "when Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost (John 19:30)." "He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true (John 3:33)." "If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord (I Cor. 9:2)."

(2) The seal signifies ownership, and is proprietary. "So I took the evidence of the purchase, both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open (Jer. 32:11)." "Nevertheless the foundation of

God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity (II Tim. 2:19)." The Lord places a mark upon His own.

(3) The seal gave security guarding treasure from injurious hands. When the tomb of Christ was sealed as a security against the possible abduction of His body, it bore a protecting seal. "Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring: for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse (Esth. 8:8)." "And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords, that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel (Dan. 6:17)." "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30)."

(4) The seal is a distinctive mark indicating that the article is genuine and is set apart from all others below the standard. This distinctive mark may have been made to pave the way for future claiming of property: "When, therefore, I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain (Rom. 15:28)."

It is not improbable that God's sealing of a believer covers the four points above mentioned.

The pronoun "ye" is also emphasized. All who are regenerated are sealed whether they be Jew or Gentile. All those who, through faith, receive Christ as a personal Savior, are brought into the fellowship of believers and are sealed with the mark which tells the world that they belong to God Who has purchased them. "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (I Cor. 6:19,20)." This seal will protect them from evil. "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30)." This seal confirms their Divine sonship, "and because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the

Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father (Gal. 4:6),” and gives each a share in the full promises of God “for all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him, Amen, unto the glory of God by us. Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts (II Cor. 1:20, 22).”

This seal stamps us as being God’s possession, it also tells us we are the possessor of all of His treasure. It assures us that we are His and secures us all good. “Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads (Rev. 7:3).” “Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts (II Cor. 1:22).” “He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true (John 3:33).” “So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch (Matt. 27:66).”

THE SPIRIT PROMISED.

With that Holy Spirit of promise: The seal of Divine ownership is visible not only to God but also to us. Having it, we constantly desire to tell others that we belong to Him. “Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!” When a spirit of evil leaves the human heart and God moves in, certain changes take place which cannot be understood, but all know a Divine power is operating. You cannot see the wind, and yet, you can tell by its feeling and influences that the wind is blowing. You cannot see the Holy Spirit but the reality of His presence is not questioned. When a believer turns his face toward God, an unexplained urge to make changes in his thinking, habits and action, and interests give him no peace until steps that before seemed unnecessary and impossible, now become logical and imperative to happiness and peace.

We might emphasize the word “holy,” as evil spirits are seeking to claim us. “Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God (I John 4:1).” False prophets and a spirit of antichrist are constantly mocking the work of the Holy Spirit, to draw followers away from

the true Christ and prevent their ultimate sanctification through the Holy Spirit. In the New Testament church the reception of the Holy Spirit was a mark of Divine ownership. As a rule, it followed the laying on of hands and baptism. "And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostle's hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money (Acts 8:18)." "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then laid they their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:14-18)."

The Holy Spirit was frequently followed by many manifestations of supernatural powers in addition to the virtues of faith, hope, love, charity, longsuffering, patience, forgiveness. "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away (I Cor. 13:8)" might be interpreted to mean that we have no right to expect a continuance of those marvelous manifestations of Divine power recorded in Acts: "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God (Acts 10:44-46)." "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied (Acts 19:56)." Against the negative interpretation of I Cor. 13:8, place the word "of Christ." "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him (Luke 11:13)?" "The Spirit is given to those who believe on Christ (John 7:39)." "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with

you forever (John 14:16).” “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (John 14:26).”

The gift of the Spirit was given Gentiles to prove their salvation, sonship and part in the church, the living body of Christ. The Jew had no monopoly on God.

It was the Holy Spirit of promise because His coming had been predicted by the prophets of old, had been assured by Christ on the day of Pentecost, and in the fulness of time had been given in the hour of need. It was promised that “when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will shew you things to come (John 16:13).” It began fulfilment, as recorded in Acts: “And being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me (1:4).” As He came in outward contact with the individual, He convicted of sin, of righteousness and approaching judgment; inwardly inside He led to complete surrender and harmony with the Divine will and mind. The Holy Spirit’s arrival is a fulfilled prophecy.

XIV.

WE BELONG TO GOD

"Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."
—EPH. 1:14.

GOD'S PART PAYMENT.

Which is the earnest: "Earnest" is a word coined by the early Phoenicians. It was a pledge or part payment made by a purchaser to seal a bargain, an advanced payment of wages by the employer, a down-payment on a contract later to be completed, or a bond binding one to carry out the whole agreement to the letter. An earnest or pledge represented therefore, an agreement between one or more parties, a part payment, a sample of goods later to be delivered in full and in like kind. How admirably this describes the blessings of the Christian. The Holy Spirit is a down-payment, a guarantee to the believer that heaven will bring all the human heart desires. It convinces the Christian that if God has given us the mercies of this life, He surely can be depended upon to do all that He says will be done in eternity. He, having freely given us the breath of life will also give us eternal life. "Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts (II Cor. 1:22)." "Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit (II Cor. 5:5)." God's Spirit is given to the saints as a part payment of their future glory. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord (II Cor. 3:18)." "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is (I John 3:2)." We receive the firstfruits of the

Spirit in this life. "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body (Rom. 8:23)." Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow (I Pet. 1:11)." Glory shall follow when we enter into complete possession of our inheritance. The best is yet to come.

A SINLESS LIFE.

Of our inheritance: The blessings imperfectly and partially received on earth will be perfectly and completely ours in glory. Our inheritance reaches to the future sinless life, the perfect love of God, the perfect place in heaven, and all that is waiting us as sons of God. Verse eighteen speaks of His inheritance in the saints. Here, our inheritance in glory is indicated. Just as the first blade of grass in the spring is a promise of all which follows, just as the first leaf prophesies the return of summer, and the first spring flower heralds the approaching millions of blossoms, so earthly blessings are pledges, part payments or promises of that which shall be ours after we have passed beyond. Let us have patience and endure.

THE END OF SEALING.

Until the redemption: Paul lifts his eyes from a prison cell. For a moment he does not see the church at Ephesus or think of their problems. He sees again the glory which appeared to him on the road to Damascus and looks beyond to what he is to be. The day is not far off when he shall be forever free from the hold of sin and the limitations of this world. Let us gaze likewise at our final redemption and look forward to our possessions in heaven. The limitations of our physical body shall come to an end. The deed has been drawn, purchase-money has been paid, part of our wealth in Christ has come, but beyond and ahead lies the turning over in full of all that was promised and absolute possession. Our salvation is certainly a thing of the present:

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved”; but it is also a future condition: “Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body (Rom. 8:23).”

WE HAVE BEEN BOUGHT.

Of the purchased possession: We have spoken of God as our possession and our right to draw, to the full, upon our privileges. Now we hear of ourselves as the purchase property of God belonging to Him, both by natural rights of a Heavenly Father and love as any father would love a child, and by acquired rights, having been redeemed and bought for His eternal use and pleasure. A full price has been paid by Christ on the Cross. We thus become God's permanent property. By being God's possession we have eternal life and immortality. At times of discouragement, doubt and temptation, rest assured God is going to keep His possession. He will not relinquish His grasp. He is able to save to the uttermost all who come to the Father by Him; not one shall be lost who is redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

We come to the close of this first group of verses comprising a hymn of praise to God. He has chosen us, He has predestined us, He has accepted us, He has redeemed us, He has brought us into fellowship with Him, He has given us an inheritance, He has sealed us by the Holy Spirit which He has promised. “For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ (I Thess. 5:9).” “He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ (II Thess. 2:14).” “But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul (Heb. 10:39).” “We are a chosen people to show forth the praises of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light (I Pet. 2:9).” We soon turn from the fifteenth to the twenty-first verse of this chapter to that wonderful and matchless prayer-seeking knowledge and power.

OUR PRAISE.

Unto the praise of his glory: Like a great Amen, this phrase repeats itself after each spiritual blessing, lest we forget

we are to use voices and lives to praise Him. Life is not to be selfishly used. We bring a tribute to the glory of God. Blessings flow from God to man, not from man to God. As we look for future possessions beyond death and eternal life, praise His glory. As pilgrims, catch the spirit of the early Crusaders who marched toward Jerusalem singing praises of their Redeemer. They did not forget Christ Who called onward and upward; every moment they fought and struggled manfully conscious of being sons of God—a privilege granted before mountains were formed, or waters filled the depths of the ocean, or skies glowed with celestial fires. We dare not live below this plane. Our faces must ever be turned toward Him and though we pass through darkness of night, our eyes eagerly seek the dawn. We elevate before our eyes the Cross upon which the blood of Christ was shed. We daily receive strength from the Father, the Fountain of our redemption, and guidance from the Spirit which leads us—pilgrims of the night—to the land fairer than this. “We shall appear with him.” Praise His name!

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH (vs. 15-23)

XV.

THE ROOT OF GOODNESS

"Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints." —EPH. 1:15.

The Book of Ephesians divides itself into two major divisions; the first having to do with our standing, and the second with our state. One great purpose is given in each section. The purpose of section one is contained in 1:9: "He having made known unto us the mystery of his will." This is followed by a prayer for the complete appropriation of God's blessings (1:15-23). The second great purpose is stated in 3:1-12, where the church is described as a mystery hidden from past ages. Again a prayer follows this purpose (3:14-19). The first purpose concerns Christ, the Head of all. The second purpose concerns the church which is the living body of Christ.

AN OCCASION FOR PRAYER.

Wherefore I also: After the Ephesians are reminded that God has chosen, predestined, accepted and redeemed them, unfolded mysteries to them, given them inheritances, and sealed them by His Spirit, Paul prays for Divine wisdom and enlightenment to completely appropriate all spiritual blessings. Because they have already received the Spirit, because they have yielded themselves to God and are heirs to all the treasures of God, and because of their present standing before God in grace, Paul prays that each one may fully realize their Divine privileges and prospects in Christ. First, he is thanking God for what they have received; and second, he prays that they might receive more. This combination of

praise and prayer is found in all of Paul's epistles, with the exception of First Corinthians and Galatians. Instead of picking out the faults, of which there were many, he enumerates Christian graces and prays that they may build upon these, developing knowledge of God's will. Because their redemption has been so wonderful and heavenly in its origin, Paul invokes God's blessing upon them to assure their continued progress and advance in the development of Christian virtues. Paul recognizes that others, following the customs of the times, were praying for those whom both love in Christ, but he urges their constant use of the sacred privilege which he covets for himself of definitely praying for God's blessing upon those whose faith, directly or indirectly, may be attributed to Paul's testimony.

PRACTICAL FAITH IN CHRIST.

After I heard of your faith: Is it not significant that, in this entire letter, no reference is made to the statistical growth of the Ephesian church? Paul was more interested in the quality of their faith than he was in their contributions, expansion, or attendance at scheduled services. If there was spiritual progress, the church would be no cause to worry. Just how Paul had received word of their condition is not known, unless (Col. 1:7) Epaphras had brought word to his room at Rome. Though it had been years since he had visited Ephesus, it is quite evident that occasional news had come to him of their state. Their faith concerned him. If their faith remained steadfast, individual problems would gradually come to a happy conclusion, but if faith weakened as they relied on their own strength or upon the reassurance of Paul's presence or message, the church was resting on a trembling, uncertain and brief foundation. Someone has spoken of faith and love as being two arms and eyes without which Christ can be neither seen nor embraced. Faith is always first in Christianity, for faith brings us to Christ. Love follows quickly upon the heels of faith. Faith prepares the soil in which Christian graces grow. The faith of the Ephesian Christians made Paul's imprisonment easier. What

parent does not find life easier to bear if all is well with his children? Do we rejoice when a soul is born into the Kingdom of God?

A FIRM FOUNDATION.

In the Lord Jesus: Faith is always maintained by connection with Christ. Faith in Christ implies fellowship with Christ. Practical living faith in Christ confers real and lasting good on man. Throughout the entire New Testament, faith is made the one thing needful. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." "According to your faith be it unto you." As in time of storm an anchor is released to grip solid ground, so in stress and strain faith clings to the firm foundation.

GENUINE LOVE FOR THE GOOD.

And love unto all the saints: The word "love" is omitted in some of the Scriptures, but this omission seriously alters the rich meaning of this verse. Paul frequently emphasizes as cardinal virtues — faith, love and charity — faith always being first. The Ephesians having trusted Jesus, would love each other and have a fraternal feeling toward all genuine disciples scattered throughout the world. While differences in character, life, and habits might separate them, a common love for Christ gave unity. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how then can he love God whom he hath not seen? (I John 5:20)." God demonstrated this broad love, "For God so loved the world that he gave . . ." Christ died loving, so all might live. Our witness to the love of Christ and testimony to the world is a love for friend and foe, for sinner and saint, for immediate friends and distant groups. It includes all who accept Christ. Paul takes no time to refer to virtues other than faith and love. No mention is made of their capacity to understand the philosophy of the day, their proficiency in healing, their leadership in the city, their appreciation of the arts so splendidly developed in artistic Ephesus, their social standing or financial rating. These things are secondary. First change the heart, clear the soil and spiritual excellences will appear. Let faith

for Christ flourish in the heart, and genuine love for the brethren demonstrate itself and any community will stay Christian.

Do not overlook ALL. The Ephesians did not pick those to be loved. All professing Christians are not lovable. We must be able to recognize love for Christ, respect it and find something to love in every human soul. Find in others what Christ finds in us, and we shall love our neighbor as ourselves.

XVI.

RELIGIOUS EXERCISES FOR THE SOUL

"Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers." —EPH. 1:16.

THE MANNER OF PRAYER.

Cease not to give thanks for you: Do we believe with Christ and Paul that prayer changes things? That man and conduct can be influenced by our prayer? Are our prayers for the church and the world generally, or do they narrow down to definite names, causes and conditions? Do we, day after day, pray for a lost soul or an evangel? Paul's prayers make an interesting study, they gleam with a sublime faith. His petitions are always pointed. They maintain a bright and joyous phraseology indicating Paul to be a man faithful in prayer. "The prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Prayer is not a matter of seconds, minutes or hours. We might as well use a prayer-wheel, or finger the beads of a rosary—if these measures have value. Prayer is a matter of the heart. Our souls reach toward God. Christ on one occasion prayed with drops of blood. A saved man instinctively prays for the lost. The world's greatest benefactors are those who pray. "Pray without ceasing." Continue in prayer until you are satisfied God has answered.

The first words of practically all of Paul's epistles express gratitude for God's past blessings, and seek continued outpouring of Divine favor. Paul gives thanks for those who love Christ. Glance for a moment at some of these prayers. To the Romans he writes, "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world . . . I make mention of you always in my prayers (Chap. 1:8,9)." In I Corinthians (1:4), he thanks God for the grace of God which is given them by Christ, and prays that they may grow in the grace of holy unity. In Philippians (1:3), he thanks God "upon every re-

membrance of you. Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now." In Colossians (1:3), he prays "always for you" and gives thanks to "God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." In I Thessalonians (2:13; 1:2), he gives thanks because "when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" . . . "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers." In II Thessalonians (1:3,11,12), he thanks God because their "faith groweth exceedingly and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth." In II Thessalonians (2:13), he thanks God who "from the beginning hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." In Philippians (4:6), he thanks God and prays that the communication of his faith may be effectual. In II Timothy (1:3), he prays without ceasing for remembrance of them in his prayers day and night greatly desiring to see them.

Just what do we thank God for? Do we stop with food, health, air, sunshine, rest, work, or do we add praise for changes in our friends for whom we have prayed? Paul is made happy because he sees that Christ has used him in all these churches, and has spoken through him. He prays for continued spiritual progress. His life is wrapped up in his charges. He lives for them as any parent lives to hear good accounts of his children. "Now I live if ye stand fast in the Lord."

It is worthy of note that the word "thanks" used in this verse is the same as was employed in Matthew (15:36), when Christ gave thanks and brake the loaves and fishes before giving them to the multitude. The word "thanks" is used thirty-eight times in the epistles of Paul.

The particular posture of Paul is unimportant. There were times when he must have prayed on board ship, or walking from city to city, or when in prison. Sometimes he was upon his knees. Posture is not as vital as the spirit and the results. "God bless" is hardly adequate. Individual,

family and even church praying is becoming more liturgical. A prayer may be beautiful yet not reach God or produce changes. A heart-yearning for the souls of others does not worry for adequate phrases—words pour out like sweet incense upon the altar of God. Let us pray for members of other churches, pray for ourselves and give thanks for the vast multitude who see in the Cross a symbol of their redemption. Let us include in our words of gratitude, praise for fellow-Christians, their lives and influence. May we always, as Paul, seek to find, even in struggling faith, the life which can be nourished to health. Ignore the faults present and evident in all of us, and recall these traits of goodness which, when properly watered by the words of God, and strengthened by the light of His Spirit, bring forth fruits worthy of repentance and life. Give thanks for every heart hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

INTERCESSION.

Making mention of you: Time and space does not warrant the inclusion here of the names in the mind of the apostle. Whether this mention was collective or individual, we are left in doubt. We know from numerous personal references in his epistles, that Paul was very solicitous about his acquaintances and friends. Their names were on his prayer-list. His affection embraced each new church which came under his loving protection and supervision. He trained disciples to pray for him, each other and sister churches. He prayed God to strengthen their faith and knowledge, harmonize religious differences, and wisely guide them in sending souls for the ministry. We generally pray for those whom we love by name. We can imagine Paul mentioning churches, officers, and members by name. He had not forgotten the affectionate farewell at Miletus when leaving Ephesus, where three busy years had been spent. He recalls the scene and the tear-dimmed eyes which wished him Godspeed.

WHAT ARE OUR PRAYERS.

In my prayers: There is some question as to just where this prayer begins—whether here or later in verse seventeen.

This prayer after acknowledging the power of God, expresses thanks for the faithful whose past achievements have been an honor to their Lord, and seeks grace to reach higher things. This prayer is characteristically deep, comprehensive, sublime in aspiration, powerful in pleas, and effective in range of blessings implored.

XVII.

A PRAYER FOR WISDOM AND ENLIGHTENMENT

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." —EPH. 1:17.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ: Christ, at times, referred to the Heavenly Father, not as Father, but as God. On the Cross He cries, "My God, My God, (Matt. 27:26)." At the moment of ascension He says, "my Father and your Father, and my God and your God (John 20:17)." As the Divine Creator was God of our Lord, as He was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, so He is to be our God, a God who is sovereign in every respect, a God who knows all, a God who revealed Himself through our Lord, and a God who by His power raised Christ from the dead, a God who will reveal Himself through us and raise us from the dead.

SOURCE OF GLORY.

The Father of glory: We think of God as dwelling "in light which no man could approach unto"; of God as being surrounded by glory because He is glorious Himself and to whom all glory belongs. Glory comes from Him. Glory describes Him, and glory is reflected in His Son who is the Lord of glory (James 2:1). God is the origin of all glory, He is the possessor of all Divine holiness, might, majesty, and beauty. He shares His glory with His Son (I Cor. 2:8), whom He has raised from the dead by His glory (Rom. 6:4). Having glorified Jesus after His suffering, with the glory which He had before the world began, it is reasonable to expect that having adopted us as sons and having made us joint-heirs with Christ, He will glorify us when we come into

His presence. We can expectantly hope not only to behold His glory and to be surrounded with His glory, but also to be radiant with His reflected glory.

PRAYER FOR WISDOM.

May give unto you the spirit of wisdom: Every true believer waits for God's gift of the Holy Spirit, as the disciples waited on the day of Pentecost. As we journey through life, we need and receive additional demonstrations of this gift. Our daily growth demands the purifying light of the Spirit if we are to advance from truth unto truth. Paul prays for three things—Divine truth, the reception of the spirit of wisdom, and growth in personal attainments. He might well pray for the single gift of God's Spirit, for the possession of this Spirit is a guarantee of an ultimate full measure of wisdom and knowledge.

Paul prays God to give them the spirit of wisdom, the essence of wisdom, and an understanding of the Word of God. "Thou shalt speak to all that are wise hearted whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom (Ex. 28:3)." If they are to be what Jesus would have them be, they need personal illumination, new insight, and lifting of the vail between them and God's great truths. Laymen as well as apostles received the spirit of wisdom. The Spirit referred to here, is the Holy Spirit rather than any spirit of man himself. Man's spirit is to be moved by God's Spirit. A great deal of importance is attached to this Spirit. The word "Spirit" is used three hundred and eighty-five times in the New Testament.

"God is a Spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24)." The Spirit is the fountain and inspiration of all spiritual enlargements and knowledge of heavenly things. Paul prays therefore for the possession of wisdom. Possibly the Ephesians were emotional, capable of high things, but lived on low levels. Possibly they needed more of the faith and love which always precedes wisdom and knowledge; possibly they needed to stress Divine understanding rather than the wisdom of man. Paul

was certain no wisdom could equal God's wisdom which gives a new sense of life's values, helps select those of utmost importance, sets their lives in order, and gives strength to attain our heavenly goal. The Spirit of wisdom was not just something with which they were to be filled; it required definite mental activity on their part in choice, forgiveness, patience and steadfastness.

GOD MADE KNOWN.

And revelation: A revelation is needed to give man knowledge of what has been hidden from him. Man cannot reason revealed truth, he received it as God wills to unfold desired truth formerly a mystery. The word "revelation" comes from "apo" meaning "from" and "kalupto" "to cover"; hence, it means unveiling. God makes known in Revelation what He has previously hidden from our eyes. It is therefore a gift. It cannot be created or controlled by man. The Spirit presents us with truth formerly unperceived, as the sun passing from beyond a dark cloud lights the earth below, and makes clear and distinct what was formerly imperfectly seen. All knowledge has not yet been revealed.

THE SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE.

In the knowledge of him [the Father]: Knowledge has two classifications. (1) It can mean practically understanding something which has been puzzling; a grasping of all illuminating facts; true, full knowledge opposed to the imperfect and partial. This, however, may be scholastic, documental and cold. We need more. (2) We need spiritual understanding and that feeling of intimacy existing between an understanding father and son, a knowledge deeper than comprehension. For this we must go to the Father. Life tells us to know ourselves, but Christianity tells us to know our God. How much more profitable and satisfying is this knowledge. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17:3)." "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him (Matt. 11:27)."

Paul not only prays that each believer may know God, he also prays that they shall make Him known to others. Knowledge belongs to all. Our blessings are to be shared. Only by sharing can we "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen (II Pet. 3:18)." The best way to retain facts is to communicate them, not pigeon-hole them.

The Christian who shows no progress in his knowledge of the Bible, no growth or expansion in good works has begun to die. A tree lives or dies. Holiness follows knowledge of Jesus. New knowledge gives a challenge to delve deeper into Biblical truths. Each new truth may be a door opening to undiscovered treasure. We need to know Christ now, if we are to know God. Jesus shows us the Father.

XVIII.

THE EYES OF THE HEART

"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what is the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."

—EPH. 1:18.

THE EYE BEHIND THE EYE.

The eyes of your understanding: Paul has been praying for complete knowledge of God and grace to daily apply this wisdom. In some manuscripts, the word "heart" appears instead of "understanding." The Oriental spoke of the heart as being "the core of life and the fountain of all thinking." The Bible frequently refers to the heart similarly. A Christian cannot fully appropriate Divine truth until light shines in his heart, and affections, because of it, centers on heavenly things. But we must go further than have our affections set on things above. The heart is the seat of affections, intellect and will. The heart influences the understanding and the understanding controls the will. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." Purity of heart gives us insight in the deep things of life. It leads our intuitions. For this reason it is better than accuracy of thought. Our minds may tell us what we ought to do, yet we find ourselves incapable of following the dictates of our thinkings. Fechte says that our thought is often no more than the history of our hearts. "The head is a dupe of the heart."

On a mountain side we see a group of sheep contentedly grazing on the floor of the forest and a wonderful mountain stream tumbling nearby; towering snow-covered peaks pierce the heavens; great masses of billowy clouds appear and disappear; brilliantly colored flowers, such as only high altitudes can produce, bloom in every exposed spot. The sheep

graze on. To them, life is the grass at their feet. Standing in this same picture is a man with quickened pulse, shining eyes, and glowing heart who sees about him the majesty of the Creator. A great peace takes possession of him, he understands imperfectly and yet, sufficiently, that this is God's gift to man, that man in himself has a gift for God. The difference between the understanding of the sheep and the man is the difference between the understanding of the heart and the mere sight of the eyes. Go a step further. Two men sit side by side in church on the same Sunday, listen to the same preacher give the same sermon. One hears words which are soon forgotten; the other finds a message which brings him face to face with his sinful self and drives him to seek pardon from God. He finds "the peace that passeth all understanding." Paul would have every Christian not only be conscious of the existence of God, but also be so keenly alive to Him, that the spreading of the gospel is everything. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (II Cor. 4:6)." By the eyes of our heart we intelligently see God and His gifts in the light of truth. "God said, Let there be light (Gen. 1:3)." God is still saying to each lost soul, living in darkness and separated from God, "Let there be light." (Read II Cor. 3:12; 4:6 for light.)

Satan works to close eyes lest they see Christ and turn toward Him. God in His great providence, sometimes waits, knowing that His creatures are not ready to receive a message from Him. "He hath blinded their eyes and hardened their heart that they should not see with their eyes nor understand with their hearts (John 12:40)." Paul was convinced that he was sent to the Gentiles "to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light (Acts 27:18)." David constantly prayed for open eyes that he might behold wonderful things out of God's law (Psalm 119:18). This should be our prayer. The eye is the symbol of intelligence. Our spiritual eye may be perfect.

LIGHT FOR SHADOW.

Being enlightened [illuminated]: When the eyes of our heart see light, many things previously hidden, appear. Curtains lifted in a darkened room dispel shadow, scatter darkness and bring every object into clear view. So, when Christ enters the understanding, many things far from clear and apparently incapable of comprehension, become understandable under the supervision of a just and loving God. Christ came to bring light upon sin, pardon, death, judgment and immortality. When we have a feeling of resentment or rebellion against God because of sorrow, loss, pain or unanswered prayer, our eyes are closed or blinded, but when we patiently say, "Thy will be done," realizing God's knowledge is greater than the wisdom of man, our eyes are opened and we soon have peace from above.

Darkness is always associated with ignorance, evil, fear, coldness and hesitancy. Light means knowledge, goodness, confidence, warmth, life, pleasure and anticipation. When the eyes of our soul are open, we see what is the hope of His calling; we see the riches of God's glory and we see the greatness of our Heavenly Father's power. This knowledge does not come to us by mere intellect. The heart co-operates with the head. God gives light and understanding. A delicate operation may frequently restore lost vision. A person suffering from blindness may cry, "I see!" The surgeon has given light. God is the Divine surgeon who operates upon eyes blinded by sin. "And hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true (I John 5:20)." "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God (II Cor. 3:5)." "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to other in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand (Luke 8:10)." How many the world soon forgets! Other memories always wear halos. The world is better for their efforts.

The prayer of every Christian ought to be, "Open Thou mine eyes that I may see the wondrous thing out of thy law." Every portion of the Bible has undiscovered riches; every

passage apparently familiar and understandable, is a challenge for more minute inspection for truths not yet revealed. It is possible to be "gospel-hardened." Pray for enlightenment.

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE.

That ye may know [Intuitively—without effort]: The object of all knowledge is God. No knowledge has value unless it is knowledge of Him. Many make the mistake of absorbing facts in order to converse fluently and intelligently at the club or dinner table. They want contacts and influence. All this knowledge cannot save a soul from eternal punishment. But knowledge of God reveals our sinful self. His waiting pardon brings us, like the prodigal, to our senses.

Every intelligent man longs for knowledge. Fortunes have been made by those seeking to supply the demand. Libraries increase in size. God has placed in a single volume all that is needed to make us happy on earth and assure us of heaven. Very few facts are needed in salvation. Christ stressed the importance of believing. Believe that God can save us; believe that we can be kept from falling; believe that the world can be saved through the gospel. We can be grateful that we do not have to know much about God to save our souls. We do not need to be familiar with the Greek or Hebrew. The thief on the cross did not have opportunity to listen to a sermon, read a book, attend a conference or discuss religion, but he accepted Christ's offer and had the assurance of being with Him that day in Paradise.

We have that same hope. The gospel is a history of souls saved by faith in Christ. How childlike our knowledge is to be. What a child knows to trust a mother, that we need to know to trust God. We must know that we are called "of God to be sons and heirs of Christ." We must know that a rich inheritance is laid up for those who take Christ as their personal Savior. We must know that every saved soul is a treasured inheritance of God. We must know that the Holy Spirit has power to make us what we ought to be. The Holy Spirit can change every believing soul into a saint.

There are not more saints because more sinners will not allow the Spirit of God to have His way with them.

It takes a perfectly designed machine, in perfect condition to turn out a perfect product. The machine may be in full operation but unless material is fed to it, how can it work to advantage? God has given us a perfect mind capable of knowing the way of salvation. It was created to know God. Do we know Him? We must allow His Spirit to have full control if our life is to be what He would have it be. No seeker need cry "Oh that I might know Him." God is knowable. "Seek and ye shall find."

A SAVING HOPE.

What is the hope: The hope is more than just desire. This hope brings absolute satisfaction. When God asks man to unite with Himself, in Christ, He is planning to satisfy the most ardent hopes of the human heart. "Hope toward God . . . that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust (Acts 24:15)." "We are saved by hope (Rom 8:24)." "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel . . . Which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col. 1:5, 27)." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (I Pet. 1:3)." "We are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure (I John 3:2,3)." All other hopes are as dross beside the hope of being like Him.

Such hopes of glory in the present and future life are an anchor to the soul; to them we cling, for by them we are saved and because of them we receive our reward in heaven. All these hopes begin with the fact that God has called us. We first hope He has called us, then know He has called us, accept His gracious invitation to come, and finally, live in the hope of glory to be revealed in us and to us.

This hope will bring us safely home to heaven. It will free us from the pettiness of the evil world in which we live and lift us into heavenly places. It will give us grit to persist to the end of our journey, to cut away from entangling alliances, and press toward the mark to gain Christ and the power of His resurrection in us.

When this hope is within us, our life changes as it did for Peter. We follow Christ and learn of Him, then confess Him before others. We have a story to tell. Paul's life's ambition was to know Him and to have others know Him. "This one thing I do." He was not thinking of death except as a removal of the veil. Life was a daily opportunity to bring the message of Christ to others. How common and trivial are all hopes when placed by this eternal and living hope! Pray for life to tell more of this hope which banishes fear, sin, worry, distress, and despair. Throw out the hope of His calling as a life line. This hope may cure more animosities and langor than a store of medicine. This hope has inspired big business, brought health and zest to life.

A HEAVENLY INVITATION.

Of his calling: God calls us "that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light (I Pet. 2:9)." "But unto them which are called, both, Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God (I Cor. 1:27)." "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose (Rom. 8:28)." The called of God are followers of Christ. "For many are called, but few are chosen (Matt. 22:14)."

Many calls have in them no power to cause those who hear them to accept. Other calls have in them a power compelling obedience. God's call to sonship inspires every listener to make good for Jesus' sake with the power of the Holy Spirit. We are called to peace. "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful (Gal. 3:15)," to blessing,

“not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing (I Pet. 3:9),” and to eternal glory, “but the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus (I Pet. 5:10).” The hope of His calling is the call to sonship, transfiguration of our bodies and heavenly glories.

GOD’S WEALTH IN US.

And what the riches of the glory: Paul’s first desire was that each one should have the hope of His calling, should know that God is calling him and answer that call. He now prays that every Christian may know the glorious things of the future. He is thinking of the eternal glory awaiting the church. Paul has spoken of the wealth we have in Christ and God’s wealth in each redeemed soul. He now speaks of God’s wealth in us. We are God’s own to show forth His glory. Our affection and services are His riches. We can all “rejoice in hope of the glory of God (Rom. 5:2).” We know of our body that “it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power (I Cor. 15:43).” How we long “that he might make known the riches of his glory (Rom. 9:23).” When suffering, He shows us, “for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory (II Cor. 4:17).” It is to those born again, “to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col. 1:27).”

The church, made up of the redeemed, is not only a possession of God, but also a treasure. Every sinner, saved by grace and kept by the power of His Spirit, adds glory to God. God was glorified when Israel, passing forty years in wilderness wandering, entered into the Promised Land of peace. When the redeemed church consecrates itself to fulfill the work of Christ, Jehovah will be glorified. So many of us are not living up to our privilege, we are poverty-stricken spiritually; we have scanty resources of the heart; we have a poor sense of values; we struggle for earthy glories

which soon shall pass away, and ignore the glory which is everlasting. "He shall receive and give glory that fadeth not away." "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19)." "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear (Matt. 13:43)."

If God finds me worth saving, wants to redeem me, and have me with Him in heaven, what am I that I should oppose the will of God, and by the foolish exercise of free will, rob myself of my birthright and rob God of His treasured possession—my soul?

GOD'S POSSESSIONS.

Of his inheritance: The Lord has possessions or inheritances for His saints. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God." What a stupendous fact! The Creator of all the universe, who made the heavens, the earth and "all that in them is," not only notices and interests Himself in us, mere atoms of creation, but wants to keep us for His own and would rather have us than anything else He has made. His only Son died for man, not creation. He thinks more of the soul of man than He does about the complex universe and its operation. The Lord's portion is His people. The saints who have the Holy Spirit in their lives are the real riches of God. Israel was Jehovah's inheritance, "the people whom He hath chosen for his own inheritance (Psa. 33:12)."

Christ spoke of the preciousness of man. Although He was poor, having no place to lay His head, yet He was rich in the hearts which loved Him, and served Him. "On earth ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people for all the earth is mine." I am His child. In heaven, the church which is His body, will be His treasure. "He that is mighty hath magnified me." We are children of eternity.

God sets store by the frail, poor, children of the dust. He places supreme value upon our human love and cares more for us than for the entire universe. "The Lord's por-

tion is his people." God loves the world—of living souls. The soul of man redeemed by Christ and sanctified by the Spirit "is more precious than gold, yea than much fine gold." *In the saints:* The saints refer, here, not to members of the church who are struggling toward perfection, but to those who have passed beyond and are, therefore, absolutely perfected. This is our inheritance. Let us learn to have a high respect for ourselves; never think of ourselves as being ordinary or common; nor take our talent as something unfit for the Master's use. God can be praised in the exercise of our abilities. In the Parable of the Talents, each was expected to show an increase. It was not enough to safely keep what had been given. Talents must earn and yield dividends.

XIX.

THE POWER OF GOD

"And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power."
—EPH. 1:19.

THE NATURE OF POWER.

And what is the exceeding greatness: We might as well try to measure infinity with a foot-rule as to endeavor to fathom the greatness of God. A spoon can as soon empty the ocean as we exhaust the resources of God. How wide is our horizon in seeing the greatness of God? How much of Him are we capable of receiving? Despite the tremendous power of God, His attributes and influences can be felt in our life. The grace of God can be in us. "Their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you (II Cor. 9:14)." The exceeding greatness of God lives in His longing to possess even me; with all my sin, He wishes me, and follows me all the days of my life; despite my rejection, my failings, my willfulness, He loves me still.

We can reflect His glory. "For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth (II Cor. 3:10)." A mirror possessing no brilliance can reflect the rays of the sun. If discouraged, tempted, and surrounded by circumstances which seem unsurmountable, turn to Romans: "If God be for us who can be against us? (8:31)."

HIS POWER.

Of his power: We come now to Paul's third petition that we might all personally experience God's power. In this verse, four different words are used to express the might of God. The first is "*dunamis*" which means "Inherent power," or power capable of reproducing itself. From this word we

receive our English word "dynamo" and "dynamic." The power of God is a generating influence within man when he yields to Christ. It changes his nature from grace to grace until the resurrection of his body. This power is continuous in its operation. It never lets go. The same power which raised Christ from the dead will also raise us who were dead and buried in sin. It raises us to a new consciousness of our standing before God, leads us through various stages of salvation, and results in our sanctification on earth and beautification in heaven. It begins its work as soon as we find the Lord Jesus and it keeps in constant touch with us throughout all the ages. It is a Divine power. It is life in Christ, and Christ within us.

This has different influences in our lives. It saves us. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (Rom. 1:16)." We shall be resurrected by His power. "And God hath both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by his own power (I Cor. 6:14)." His knowledge is to be communicated to us. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us (II Cor. 4:6, 7)." We are healed. "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me (II Cor. 12:9)." We live with Him. "For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you (II Cor. 13:4)." He works in us. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man (Eph. 3:20, 16)." Our faith is strengthened. "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that

our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power (II Thess. 1:11).” “Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God (II Tim. 1:6).” He keeps us. “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (I Pet. 1:5).”

THE SPHERE IN WHICH GOD’S POWER OPERATES.

To usward who believe: Marvel of marvels, all God’s power is directed toward us and is freely offered to give mastery to all who believe. “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth (Mark 9:23).” Paul makes it clear we do not all receive the same expression of God’s power. He does not always operate in identical fashion. Our different temperaments, dispositions, and circumstances decide the particular form that power may take. But we can be sure of this, sin is forgiven, our souls are saved and prepared for a place in heaven. In God’s plan of creation, there are many trees, plants, shrubs, animals, fish and insects, each perfect in itself, each different from the other, each responsible for its being to the Divine Creator. Man differs from man in character and form, but God formed us from the dust of earth. God alone can change our life. His power redeems the sinner, transforms the believer, and beautifies the disciple. God did not give any help to Christ, His only begotten Son, that He will not give us, His children. All energy of the Divine Being applied to our feeble, languid and helpless life will give it strength, vigor, health and make it a new creation. The cold hearts becomes enthusiastic. The tattered life is clothed for heaven, timidity to stand in the presence of God becomes confidence.

God’s saving power is first directed toward us at our conversion. “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son (Col. 1:13).” Second, it follows us through passing years. “We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (I Pet. 1:5).” “Your faith should stand in the power of God (I Cor.

2:5).” Third, it is completely revealed beyond. “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself (Phil. 3:21).”

Our only step is to believe. Reach toward Him. Cling closely to Him. Fight the good fight of faith. This particular word “have belief” is used ninety-four times in the New Testament. It is a saving faith, assuring us that sin cannot shipwreck the life or the body containing the precious cargo of a soul which is God’s treasure.

HOW GREAT IS GOD’S POWER.

According to the working: The second Greek word for “power” is “*energeia*” from which the English word “energy” is derived. It refers to effective strength from within. “Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders (II Thess. 2:9).” This energy was demonstrated in our Lord’s resurrection, was constantly present throughout the life of Christ. Nothing less than this wondrous strength is ours. “Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily (Col. 1:29).” The same power which raised Christ from the dead and placed Him at the right hand of God will raise us up and lift us into glory. Be unsatisfied and restless until this power is yours. How indifferent we are to what we might be through Him. Live up to privilege and possibility.

POWER TO SAVE.

Of his mighty power: The literal translation is “the strength of his might.” We find here the third and fourth Greek words describing God’s power. The third “*kratos*” is power put forth with effort and demonstrated particularly in government as in a theocracy, a government by God; an aristocracy, a government by a chosen leader; and a democracy, a government by the people. The fourth word “*ischus*” mean physical strength. “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and

with all thy strength; this is the first commandment (Mark 12:30)."

Do you see the challenge of Paul's prayer? How he was seeking to stimulate his readers to effort, and let them find how far below standard their life had been? Paul was anxious for this Ephesian church, like every church, to demonstrate the power of God in a manner reflecting credit upon its Creator and Giver; Paul's expression of His mighty power was a proof of what He could do for them, or for us. He can turn defeat into victory, death into life, humiliation into exultation. He can change a sinner into a saint. Paul's life is a living testimony of His power. Where he had formerly persecuted and blasphemed the church, he is now its most ardent supporter and leader. Pray that God may express this power in you. The story is told of a wildcat caught in a trap. A tender-hearted hunter released him and nourished him back to health. They became fast friends, and frequently went on hunting expeditions together. But the footprints of the wildcat always told the story of the trap. A trailing limb left the marks of a maimed foot that never straightened.

What trail do we leave behind? Having been saved from the clutches of sin and the snare of the tempter, do scars of the old life remain—an uncharitable judgment? A love for the world? Covetousness of our neighbor? Hatred toward an enemy? A desire to retaliate? If so, remember, the power of God is mighty to save. We can be possessors of a salvation which shall reveal in us all that was revealed in Christ or in Paul.

XX.

THE POWER OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

"Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places."
—EPH. 1:20.

GOD'S POWER DEMONSTRATED.

Which he wrought in Christ: Paul's prayer for the church, found in the fifteenth to the twenty-third verses of this chapter, concludes with a fourfold description of God's mighty power. 1. God raised Christ from the dead. 2. God elevated Him to His own right hand. 3. God places authority over all principalities and powers in His hand. 4. God makes Him the Head of the church which is His body.

We have been speaking of God's creative, saving and maintaining power freely expressed in the moral and spiritual world in changing our nature, redeeming our souls, transforming our lives and beautifying our characters. This power sees its perfect work in raising the lifeless body of Christ from the tomb and making it live forever. This power of new life expressed in Christ, differed from the resurrections demonstrated by Elijah and by Jesus in that those raised by Elijah again experienced death, while Christ rose to eternal life, never again like mortal man to taste of death. Lazarus finally lay in a tomb. As Son of man Christ must die, but as Son of God He must live forever. The whole future influence, growth and power of the church depended upon this power of Christ's resurrection to raise every disciple.

During Christ's lifetime, multitudes marveled at His miracles, and thousands were spellbound by His words. His supernatural power was evident. Was He Elijah, John the Baptist or Messiah? It was not until He rose from the grave that some realized the worker of miracles was none other

than the Son of God. Gradually the church understood the resurrection power of Christ was its possession. Never forget that the same power which raised Christ from the tomb shall some day lift us to be in heavenly places with Him. Saving power makes us new creatures in Christ; keeping power holds us steadfast in the faith; resurrection power lifts us to the throne.

From that first Easter, a new power has been felt by man. Great triumphs over evil have been won, new confidence has characterized the church. It has become an evangelizing agency, winning victory over ignorance, superstition and false religions. This God-given power is similar in kind to the energy given the Son of God, expressing itself first in acts of creation, demonstrating itself during His earthly ministry as Son of man, sustaining the Savior in His vicarious sacrifice on the Cross, elevating the risen Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration and directing His activities as indwelling Redeemer. The working energy of our faith is this power.

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

When he raised him: The sacrifice on the Cross was needed to save man from his sins. Only the blood of an innocent Savior could pay the penalty of our sins and restore our souls. But we are not asked to stand before a picture of the crucifixion, inspiring at it is, contemplate the Transfiguration. Shed our tears at the tomb, if we will, but lift our eyes with Mary, and hear, "He is not here, he is risen." God's raising His only begotten Son to triumph over physical death is a symbol of God's power to raise us from the dead and give us eternal redemption from sin.

Christ's resurrection proved Divine Sonship. Even the disciples themselves had doubts about this resurrection. It seemed too good to be true. How soon seven despondent disciples went fishing and in their despair were unable to recognize the risen Lord on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. This error was soon corrected. The writers of the early church history repeatedly preached Christ's resurrection. It was one of their strongest arguments in calling for converts. It took the same power to lift fallen man as to raise a crucified Lord.

"Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it (Acts 2:24)." "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree (Acts 5:30)." "But God raised him from the dead (Acts 13:30)." "But he whom God raised again, saw no corruption (Acts 13:37)." "He hath raised him from the dead (Acts 17:31)." "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4)." "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise us up by his power (I Cor. 6:14)." "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant make you perfect in every good work (Heb. 13:20, 21)." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (I Pet. 1:3)."

TRIUMPH OVER DEATH.

From the dead: The Sonship of Christ was proved. That Easter morning His disciples must have all doubts and fears removed. His body was not stolen. They were not deceived. He lived! We, who are dead in trespasses and sin, can be raised, not only from the sin which so easily besets us, but also from the sleep of death. Seventy times in the New Testament the word "raising" is used to describe the resurrection. Two phases mark the exaltation of Jesus. The first brought Him from the Cross to new life among man; the second lifted Him from the forty days visit with His friends, between the resurrection and ascension, to a place on the throne of God in heaven. We shall be lifted from mortality to immortality and from life to everlasting life.

God who had the power to raise Christ, has the power to lift us. This is the mainspring of Paul's life and doctrine. Nothing less could be preached to sinning, despondent, fearing mankind. The manhood of the Master, His sublime

teaching, His perfect character, would exalt Him to peerage among the noble characters of history. This is insufficient. Mankind needs a Savior. Only a risen Savior, Son of the eternal God, victor over death, vested with immortality and the firstfruits of them that slept, can suffice. We need a living Savior who can do for us all that Jesus did during His life on earth. We can have Him. We yearn for that same power to be expressed in us. The Son surviving the Cross, transformed into an immortal Being, dwelling in the presence of God, satisfies our conception of what a Savior ought to be, what we wish for those we love, and what we pray for ourselves. The power raising Christ from the dead will be given all who believe on Christ. Who better knows what we need? Surrender! Become members of His mystical body and part of the church which is His body. The power which revived His lifeless form and transformed it into a spiritual body will change our soul and give to us a glorified body to join the glory surrounding the throne of God.

In this living Christ who appeared to him on the Damascus Road, Paul sees: (1) A pledge of our own resurrection. Only through Christ can we who sin ever hope to stand in the presence of God. (2) He sees in the resurrection of Christ the certain hope for ourselves that we shall be with Him. If He did not rise, we die in our sins. "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification (Rom. 4:25)." (3) He sees in His resurrection an invitation to open the door of our heart and receive the Presence and power into our life. We may daily see and feel the risen Lord. "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death (Phil. 3:10)." "Jesus saith unto him, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live (John 11:25)." (4) He also sees a definite pledge of our own immortality and of our future glorified life. "Where I am, there ye may be also."

CHRIST EXALTED.

And set him at his own right hand: The right hand is always the place of authority. Christ is to share God's kingly power. Glance for a moment at a thumbnail biography of one who sits exalted. "And God said, Let *us* make man in our image, after our likeness (Gen. 1:26)" indicates Christ had a part with God in the various acts of creation. The prophecy concerning His visitation has been fulfilled. The Pascal lamb has been offered. The price has been paid. Man has been redeemed. The Comforter has come. Now Christ shares the throne and rules with God, who from the beginning, sat upon His throne.

The forty days Christ spent on earth, after His resurrection, during which He was seen at various times and places by His apostles and disciples to prove that His promise and prophecy had been fulfilled, were only a step in His march toward glorification. From the Cross and tomb He ascends to the throne of glory. The Son of man became King of kings. "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father (John 16:28)." "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory (I Tim. 3:16)." "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father, the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear (Acts 2:33)." "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins (Acts 5:31)." "But he [Stephen], being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God (Acts 7:55)." "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us (Rom. 8:34)." "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God (Col. 3:1)." "For the Lord himself will de-

scend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first (I Thess. 4:16)."

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne (Rev. 3:31)." Do you catch the force of that invitation?—"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." To be in heaven is enough. The trials of this life are a cheap price to pay for the glory of heaven but to sit on His throne—what an incentive to keep from being weary of well-doing, to persist in godliness, to constantly seek those things which are above!

In the heavenly places: There is difference of opinion as to where God's throne is located. What does it matter? Heaven is where God is. We cannot limit God to one place. The universe is His to tend—my prayers need answers. It is quite natural to want to localize Him, but can we, need we? God is everywhere—in heavenly places—that deathless world of God, of angels and the redeemed. The Galilæan Peasant who had no place to lay His head, who had so little of the wealth of this world, is now the Prince of heavenly places, surrounded by a glory such as has not been revealed to human eyes. He lives with the angels, surrounded by heavenly hosts and bathed in the glorious light which human eyes would be blinded by beholding. Jesus, whose brow once was crowned with thorns, now wears a diadem such as has never graced the head of any king on earth. Jesus' hand, once nailed to the Cross and bearing the scar which even a doubting Thomas could see, now holds a scepter and rules with might and power; the kings of the earth fall in submission before Him. Nothing less resplendent is worthy of the Lamb that was slain for the sins of a rebellious people.

Stephen, the first martyr of the early church, on the occasion of his stoning outside of the city gates, saw heaven open and the Son of God sitting on the right hand of God. Saul, on the Damascus road, had a vision which those stirring the dust of that highway did not see. The prisoner of

Patmos recognized Him as He began to describe the vision which has challenged the mind of man ever since. "Where I am, there ye may be also (John 14:3)." What this promise meant to Paul, what it meant to the martyrs in the Roman arena, what it meant to Luther, Huss and the leaders of Christendom, it can mean to us. Learn to walk on earth, yet catch vision of the heavenly places.

XXI.

EXALTATION OF CHRIST

"Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." —EPH. 1:21.

A KING AND HIS HOSTS.

Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion: Paul sees the power of God demonstrated in Christ's resurrection from the grave and His ascent into heaven to sit on the right hand of God, and also in His exaltation above all angelic ranks and orders of this superhuman world. Christ, who was in part, Creator of all, is now the Head of them all. "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him (Col. 1:16)." "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him (I Pet. 3:22)." "And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beast and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands . . . and every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever (Rev. 5. 11, 13)." Christ is so far above all powers that none can oppose Him, be confused with Him or be equal to Him.

There has been some dissension as to the meaning of these various principalities. Do they refer to angelic orders? At

the time of Paul, many believed that they did. Dionysius classified angelic hosts into three divisions—(1) seraphim, cherubim, and throne; (2) dominion, virtue, and powers; (3) principalities, archangels, and angels. We hardly feel, however, that Paul had any desire to recognize this division. He was making the point that God is over all powers, and Christ is Lord of all. The earth upon which Christ had lived for a few brief years was a mere speck in a vast heavenly system. God ruled the creatures on this earth, but also the celestial bodies and angelic hosts about which we know so little. Christ's power is demonstrated in the life of believers and in the angels who are His servants. This exalted Christ is our Savior. Let us not miss Paul's message by idle speculation and minute examination of words. Christ our Lord and Savior rises above all heavenly orders and reigns supreme—"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come . . . can separate us from the love of God (Rom. 8:38, 39)."

A symbol of spiritual perfection is found in the seven-fold Headship of Christ. (1) Far above all principalities; (2) all powers; (3) all might; (4) all dominion; (5) every man; (6) all things; (7) the church. How God magnified His Son in bringing Him from this world with all its aches and pains, its dissension, sins, shames, and pettiness into this empire of all eternity! What glory shall be revealed in us when we have passed from our life on earth into this vast empire of the ages! Let us press on!

This exaltation of Christ fulfills the promise made in the Book of Daniel: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, One like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed (chap. 7:13, 14)."

NO NAME WILL EVER CAST A SHADOW ON CHRIST.

And every name that is named: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name (Phil. 2:9)." Jesus, born in a small, inconspicuous village, whose birth was virtually unexpected, whose early boyhood was spent in an ordinary home with brothers and relatives, Christ, who skillfully used the tools of a carpenter, whose feet stirred the dusty roads of the Holy Land, who faced the anguished moments of a cruel, unmerited trial, He who was railed, spit upon, and crucified, who died with crucified thieves framing the picture, now occupies a throne of honor and is exalted above every name that can be named in the whole course of human history, from Adam until the dissolution of the earth.

How can anyone lightly use such a name in cursing, or turn away from an invitation given from such lips, "Come unto me and rest," or seek to find life's way by themselves when those lips say, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me"?

ETERNAL SUPERIORITY.

Not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: No man has ever been, is, or ever shall be born whose achievements, influence, life or works, cast shadows upon or make less insignificant Christ's work. He is King of all kings, His throne rises as superbly above them all as Mount Everest looks upon the peaks of all mountains of the world. Others can make great sacrifices but none can save a soul from sin. Many wise men add to sum total of knowledge but none have been able to tell of the Father—Giver of every good and perfect gift. Benefactors have built living monuments, created endowments, bettered physical living conditions, but none have been able to say, "And I, if I be lifted up . . . will draw all men unto me." Great teachers have imparted wisdom to eager pupils, but who has ever matched the Master with this group of twelve, walking through valleys and over hillsides unfolding God's plan for the ages and inspiring them with personal loyalty, so intense that the majority died a

cruel death rather than prove unworthy of that friendship? "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth (Matt. 28:12)." Throughout all ages, no name will ever eclipse or be equal to the name of Christ. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins (Acts 5:31)." "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens (Heb. 7:26)."

He lives in heavenly dignity for ever and ever. No figure in heaven will rise above Him. Let us not lose the significance of His position. "Of his kingdom there shall be no end." Our earthly friends shall slip away one by one. Death ends our relationship to them. Christ never dies to His disciples. He is with them throughout all eternity. Death leaves our mortal bodies behind, opens the door for the glory which is to be revealed in Christ and with Christ. A Christian should be supremely happy. He has so many compensations for his earthly trial. We shall know Him who is so exalted. We shall see Him as He is. How inspiring to know our bodies, formed of the dust of the earth, are a temple in which He cares to reside! Our service for Him dare not be common to One so near, so holy, and so divine. How needless are fears which blush to own His name. Some day He will come and take us with Him to share in His triumphs. O glorious day!

XXII.

CHRIST'S SUPREME HEADSHIP

"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church." —EPH. 1:22.

CHRIST EXALTED OVER THE CREATED UNIVERSE.

And hath put all things [the whole created universe] *under his feet* [after resurrection]: In Psa. 8 and I Cor. 15:27 we have Christ pictured as ruling the whole universe, triumphing over all enemies, working with His angels, seeking and saving those that are lost, guiding man, lifting those who are fallen, comforting those who sorrow, having patience with those who sin, to lead them in final triumph to share the hour when all redeemed by His blood shall be a permanent possession.

The figurative expression "hath put all things under his feet" is derived from the custom followed by conquerors of putting their foot on the neck of captives as a symbol of submission and humble servitude. All creation is put under the feet of Christ. All who call Him Lord, are as submissive as though they were Christ's captives. All creation, animate and inanimate, hostile and friendly, will recognize Him and His undisputed authority.

The power of God is manifested in the resurrection of Christ, in His ascension into heaven, in His enthronement on the right hand of God, in His Headship over all orders, and in the picture of all creation and all creatures under His feet. We should not hide our heads in despondency when time turns her pages slowly, but lift up our eyes unto the hills from whence cometh our strength. God's enemies will be defeated. Hail to our blessed Deliverer!

GOD ASSIGNS RESPONSIBILITY TO CHRIST.

And gave him: No individual is to be the head of the earthly church. No section of the church is to lord it over another. Christ has universal authority. Christ is the universal Head of the material universe and the invisible world. To Christ and no one else has God given Headship. Go to the Director of all for marching orders, instructions and reports. In the Christian army, no officious sergeant can keep us from the Commander-in-Chief.

JESUS HAS NO LIMITATIONS.

To be the head over all things: "The head of every man is Christ (I Cor. 11:3)." He is the ruling and life-giving Head of all who live by Him and for Him. "He is the head of the body, the church (Col. 1:18)." "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power (Col. 2:10)." No power or fancied power can vanquish Him. "By him all things consist." "Without him was not anything made that was made." "The government shall be upon his shoulder." There are two senses in which He is to be Head of all. He is to be Head, first, of the church, being the source of its authority, the inspiration of its life, the pattern of its conduct, and second, He is to be Head over all things for the church—directing the angels in their administrations, having authority over the activities and decisions of kings and governments, controlling nature and checking evil in all its branches. He is to be the life-giving Head of humanity in all ages who live for Him, through Him and who belong to Him. Jesus, who possesses the form of God, and is equal with God, Christ, who was born in the likeness of man and lived in the humble form of servant, who was brother to James, is to be exalted Head of all. He is head of all by His nature born a King, by His character, just and merciful, and by His triumph over sin and death.

He is Head over all things, "chief to rule and life center to vivify." Angels and archangels are subject to Him. David pays devotion to Him: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars, which thou hast

ordained, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? (Psa. 8:3)."

Man left to his own devices, turns from God. Man with a sinful nature, is willing to sell his birthright for a mess of pottage. Man like the prodigal wastes his substance in riotous living, yet Christ desires to have such for a possession and to raise man to be with Him. Christ by whom all things exist, and without whom nothing was made that was made, Christ upon whose shoulders rest all government; Christ who directs the earth, the air, the water and all living things, desires to possess the souls of man as an inheritance. He cares more for one lost soul than for all the glory of a throne in heaven. Christ shares the joy of heaven over one sinner who repents. What a wonderful Savior! Let us trust and obey Him. Let us rid ourselves of any feeling of religious exclusiveness and possible desire to persecute those who differ from us. Our time is short. Tell others Jesus saves and has power to forgive sin. Frequently the church loses a vision of Christ as Savior of the world in its eagerness to be orthodox, ritualistic and proper. The church can make no mistake if it emphasizes what Christ was constantly emphasizing. Does man accept His plan of salvation or does he live for the world, the flesh and the devil?

LIVING APOSTLES.

To the church: Paul frequently mentions the church. He never refers to churches. He sees the church as a redeemed company organized into spiritual union with Him to attain and display His characteristic. The church is called out of this sinful world to live with Him. "Whom he called, them he also justified and whom he justified, them he also glorified (Rom. 8:30)." "The church of the firstborn (Heb. 12:23)." "For his body's sake which is the church (Col. 1:24)." "Ye shall be witnesses unto me (Acts 1:8)." "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by me, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart (II Cor. 3:3)."

Glance for a moment at this church which is the power of the risen Christ. Paul would have the Christian exhibit Christ. A Christian is a living Bible commentary read of all men. As those who live apart from Christ see changed lives in members of the church, and actions characterized by Christ's Spirit, will they seek until they find Christ. "As the world sees Christ in us, it will say, 'I know the Bible is true, I know the church lives, I am sure His grace is sufficient'" (Charles Brown). Every believer has a definite responsibility to magnify Christ in his life. The church is Christ seeking a lost world. The church is Christ's voice calling for repentance. The church is Christ ministering, healing, preaching, sheltering, comforting, guiding, teaching, and showing the Father. The church demonstrates the livableness of Christ's teaching. To this we are called. Is this a picture of the church today? The church frequently becomes petty in its assemblies; at times it has persecuted; again it is narrow and hard in its judgments; but such a church is not an ideal church. Get away from the church and look to Christ the Author and Finisher of our faith. Stop examining a mole on the cheek and listen to the voice which speaks.

The question is raised: Does this church, the body of Christ, represent only that group of believers recorded in the New Testament, or are Old Testament saints included? The church, as such, did not appear in the Old Testament. The synagogue was the symbol of God's dwellingplace and to it they came for guidance and forgiveness. But remember—the grace which was in Christ was before the beginning of the world. The nativity merely declared His sonship and the resurrection His Headship. Christ was always the Head of all believers and it seems probable that the church mentioned here was the church composed of believers of all times who have vital relations to God or His Son Jesus Christ, to whom has been given the promise—"Because I live, ye shall live also." These say, "in Him we live, and move and have our being." Christ is their life.

This church is willing to be directed by the teachings of Christ. Of all its vast, far-flung enterprises it can be

said Christ "worketh all and in all (I Cor. 2:6)." As the Head ruleth the body so Christ directs this church relying upon Him for strength to wage its warfare against sin. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me (Phil. 4:13)." All things are said and done through Christ. This church conscious of the frailties of human nature looks to Christ as being touched by our infirmities and standing, ready to forgive, and set its feet in heavenly places.

XXIII.

THE CHURCH WHICH IS HIS BODY

"Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
—EPH. 1:23.

A LIVING BODY.

Which is his body: A Christless church is a headless church. The church is Christ's body in a spiritual sense. He is its Head. His people are its members. The relations between them are as close as the union between heart and arteries. Christ is the Life of this body, its Strength. Paul speaks in Corinthians of a body as possessing various members and uses, and yet possessing unity. A body at war with itself cannot work. Hands refusing to cooperate with feet, picture a church at war within itself. Unity must pervade the whole.

There is only one head and one body. There can only be one Christ and one church. Without a head the body would be useless. Without a body the head would be incomplete.

The New Testament is singularly free from denominations. All Christians are members of the same body. The fellowship of a common love exists among Christians as a comradeship of service exists among arteries, nerves and muscles. A single task confronts them—to preach the Gospel to every creature. A single spirit prompts their endeavors to confess Christ before men. The Holy Spirit guides them to all truth.

This illustration of the church which is His body, leads to a very practical observation. As the body is an organism animated by one spirit, so the church must live in a spirit of Christlike love. As one heart pumps blood from all parts of the body, so one Fountain of blood washes away all sin. As the unified body has different members and organisms, so the church has its diversities of gifts and uses—some teach,

some preach, some heal, some visit, some sing, some pray, but all work in harmony. As each member of the body is dependent upon all other members for their life, health and fulness so all members of the church are dependent upon each other. None live an independent life. As God made various members of the body perform different functions and uses, so He has bestowed upon the church various spiritual gifts, that all working together might constitute an earthly body and glorify Him. As the mind controls the body, so Christ, the Head of all, would direct the movements of the church which is His body. As the soul becomes the animating spirit of the body, so the Holy Spirit would give life to, and control the activities of the church; as the same blood gives life to the whole, so Christ living in all redeemed would flow from one to the other, purifying, strengthening and giving power. As the mind thinks for the body, so Christ thinks for the church. As the body expresses the mind, so the church acts for Christ. Paul would gladly sacrifice everything to be a member of that living body. Will you? If you are a member of His body are you in perfect health or has sin left disease in body, mind or soul?

NOTHING LACKING.

The fulness of him: This clause may be interpreted in two ways. Does it mean that Christ completes the church, or does it mean that the church completes Christ? The first sees Christ filling the Christian with His life and grace to bring perfection; the second implies that Christ, though Head of the church which is His body, and exponent of all power surrounding the throne of God, would not be complete without the church as finally redeemed through Him. Both meanings are undoubtedly correct, and yet, here, the fullness of Him is possibly the latter.

Christ is magnified. To the individual soul who feels inconspicuous in the presence of such glory He comes and says, "Be not afraid, it is I. Do not feel minute and useless for heaven would be incomplete without you." In spite of all the angelic hosts heaven would not be heaven with-

out my redeemed and purified soul; although "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9)." Christ needs the church in order to complete His glory. The redeemed church is the complete realization of His grace, power and glory. "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature; For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him, and for him; And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself, by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven (Col. 1:15-20)."

How frequently we feel empty and unworthy. This is praiseworthy. Until we have emptied ourselves, we are not worthy of fulness and Christ cannot fill us. The church is ever changing; new converts come before her altars, but each must be filled with the Holy Spirit. As the empty cells wait to be filled with honey, so we wait for Him. The completion of the church is not unlike building a Century of Progress Exposition. A great empty space is transformed section by section into a demonstration of man's ingenuity. When the church is completed, it will receive all God has and demonstrate the fulness of God. As the ocean is filled by God with unfailing water, the needs of our church are supplied. Every new convert adds to its fulness.

As the sun floods the earth with its light, so Christ fills the church with His glory. As God gives the seed a spirit of life, so Christ places in the heart of each believer a desire to bear fruit for the Master. As every bud has potential power to blossom and give beauty and fragrance, so every soul may beautify its latter life with Christlike characteristics. The church is a living demonstration of Christ enthroned in the human heart. The church is Christ speaking to a lost world. Each individual as a part of that church

must receive His power in all of its fulness or the fulness of the church cannot be His fulness. Christ is not complete without the church.

Christ no longer walks in Palestine as in the days of Pilate. We are His hands and feet. The church is His voice. Our smiles must win friends for Him. About A. D. 30, Christ showed man the glory of God; His body, like ours, blessed others; He washed the disciples' feet; He suffered with others the experience of pain; He knew physical illness. Then He spoke "Come unto me" with tender entreaty. To-day, we are His voice. We cannot give His message until we have been filled with Him. People listen for His voice. Will you or I say God loves them, forgives them, and waits for them to be reconciled to Him? What is true of Christ must be true of the church; as He embodies all Divine attributes we must appropriate Christ's graces.

OUR POWER.

That filleth all in all: The word "all" is emphatic. Christ is no respecter of persons. One does not receive more of His blessings than another unless some empty themselves more completely than others. "All" makes no reference to our talents. He can consecrate one talent or ten talents. One talent consecrated can add as much glory to the Savior as the consecrated talent of a genius. One star differeth from another in glory, yet a single star is the handiwork of God. Frequently the consecrated humble single talent is more apt to serve Him than many talents boastfully used for self-advancement and self-interest.

He promises to fill all and to give all. The church is a receptacle for Divine grace. We need nothing He cannot supply. Only the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit can not be forgiven. Christ should be all and in all. Is He? Are we too easily satisfied? Does a fog make us happy when we need scattered rain? Do we want to be better? Are we annoyed by the intimation that we have to be born again and possess His Spirit? Do we humbly pray for a crumb of the Bread of life when we can be filled? Are we satis-

fied with a little of Christ and a lot of the world? The church which is His body can demonstrate the fulness of God only as all of its members are filled with all of His love, grace, wisdom, meekness, self-sacrifice, forbearance, and mercy. Let all of us be filled with all of Him.

CHAPTER TWO

I.

THE NEED OF GRACE

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." —EPH. 2:1.

IN CHAPTER One we have learned what God has done for His Son and the work He has given Him in the redemption of mankind. We have caught a glimpse of the church which is His body, and its final glorification. The chapter closed with the magnificent picture of the exaltation of Christ, who will be supreme and triumph over His foes. Now we turn to see this same power of God expressing itself in us, and discover what is the purpose of God and Christ in us. In order to fully appreciate the blessings of this work, we must see ourselves as absolutely needing Him. Our glory comes through union with Christ. It does not come from ourselves or any act we can perform. It is revealed through knowledge of Him, the spirit of true worship and prayer for forgiveness and guidance.

OUR RESURRECTION WITH CHRIST.

And you hath he quickened: (Upon belief): Christ's resurrection from the tomb of Joseph was the beginning of an ageless series of resurrections. Genesis tells of God's activity in physical creation. Ephesus gives us God's moral creations. Every sincere believer is a new creature. The Old Testament record of creation ended with the sixth day, but in the New Testament, there is no cessation of that exhibition of power which changes us from what we were to what He would have us to be. As long as sinners seek a Savior, creation continues. Paul informs us the miracle of resurrection is duplicated in the experience of each believer. We are glorified with Christ,

we are raised with Christ and we are exalted with Him. Our belief in His Word, our love for Him, our repentance, and our acceptance of His Spirit brings this miraculous power of God to us. Every believer is raised from spiritual death to life with Christ in heaven. The same power which opened a tomb on a hill outside the Holy City will break sin's bonds and give heaven's gift of new life to man. Nothing less than resurrection with Christ is sufficient. No rearrangement of our life, no changing of our habits, no softening of our disposition, no physical comfort, no health of body, no change of conviction can be substituted for that quickening from death to life and that change from sin to grace which Christ brings us. From serving self we turn to others; from pleasing man we please God. The power of God must act in us and only as it acts in us and quickens us can we be saved. We are quickened ideally in Christ's resurrection triumph, and, actually in our own spiritual regeneration.

SPIRITUAL DEATH.

Who were dead: We speak of death as physical. As long as a person breathes and has pulse, man thinks he lives. But in God's eyes we are dead when lacking spiritual vitality, moral activity, movement toward God, eternal life, vision to see our need of Christ and desire to avail ourselves of His offer of salvation. The unregenerate are dead. Their souls have no tinge of righteousness or holiness; they make no effort to live for Him; there is no indication of spiritual life. The unsaved person is living uselessly until Christ gives life. No alternative is offered. We are dead or alive; not suppressed, listless, weak, ill—we are dead. If dead, we need not remain so, for like Mary Magdalene and the thief on the cross, we can ask Him for that touch which will give us life and raise us into active service. Life without God is a state of death. Sin produces death. The unrepentant who flee from the voice of God, who pacify their consciences, who persist in wilful sinful living are slowly dying. God intends man to live spiritually as well as physically. His body can function perfectly, his eyes may be bright in the pursuit

of pleasure, he can be tremendously active in business and social activities and yet be lifeless in the eyes of God. The man of the world cannot think, move or act in spiritual spheres. Are you living or dead? To know God is love, is life. To breathe of His Spirit and love is to evidence vitality. The pagan world was filled with dead men, because they lived only for the world, the flesh and the devil. God was unknown.

The testimony of Scripture: "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth (I Tim. 5:6)." "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life (John 5:24)." "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life (I John 5:12)." "I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest and art dead (Rev. 3:1)." "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3)." "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you (John 6:53)." Our own tastes and desires are surrendered for God's will. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death (I John 3:14)."

THE CAUSES OF SPIRITUAL DEATH.

In trespasses and sins: All evil doings, all acts which do not harmonize with the will of God, all conditions of our mind which separate us from God are causes of death. We may fall over a stone or a precipice. Death frequently occurs from a minor accident as well as from a serious injury to the body. There are two forms of death—one physical and one spiritual. We have a mind, a body and a soul. It is possible to have a live body and yet have a dead mind and soul, or have a live body and mind but a dead soul which recognizes neither God, eternity nor the invisible. God made us to be fully alive. We can't soften, excuse, sweeten, overlook, condole, scale or minimize the word "sins." Sin is not an accident, a misfortune, fate or unavoidable circum-

stance. It is deliberate. Man was created to walk uprightly, physically and morally. A fall, thought or act which changes us from this position is apt to be injurious, and fatal.

A distinction has been made between trespass and sin. A trespass is a "falling aside"—hence a falling from truth; sin is failure to heed the Word. Trespasses being acts of transgression or the actual sin which causes the fall, while sin is falling short of the glory of God. Transgression is the lighter offence; sin is the heavier and more serious breaking of God's law. A transgression is the thought which leads to the act of sin. Transgression is the act of omission; while sin is the act of commission. Both words denote disobedience to God and neglect of His laws. Both sever us from God. I hardly think Paul intended to make such fine distinctions. He wishes the Ephesians to clearly understand that sin turns them from God's face, hinders their reaching the mark and keeps them from their inheritance. Sin leads to death, unless the blood of Christ is applied to cleanse from all sin. Converts are delivered from trespasses and sins.

II.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SPIRITUAL DEATH

"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

—EPH. 2:2.

WEIGHT OF DEATH.

Wherein in time past ye walked: Walking is a succession of steps. A person taking a single step does not walk. Spiritual death is caused by a series of acts. We travel along a path. We form habits of thinking and living. We acquire regular practices. We purposely follow the course of this world. A traveler stands at a fork in the road. Two paths lie ahead. One is the way of sin and death, the other is the way of grace and life. Along which shall he walk? The path labeled "SIN" seems too pleasant and harmless to be sin. How can danger lurk here? There are indications of distress among fellow travelers. Why worry? Paul in times past walked on the wrong road. He was without God and Christ. Every person who has been saved by Christ has walked along that road. Their experiences testify to the delusion, false hopes, snares and pitfalls of sin. It does not pay. Christ's path is the only path to follow. "I am the way." Turn from every path which does not clearly state "This is God's way of life," constantly seeking the will of God, daily praying for His guidance, blessing and life. How happy is the testimony of those who can say, "The old life is gone. My sins are behind me. From now on 'for me to live is Christ (I John 1:7).'" Put sin behind.

A SINFUL WORLD.

According to the course of this world: "Ye are of this world, I am not of this world (John 8:23)." "My kingdom is not

of this world (John 18:36).” “For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God (I Cor 3:19).” “The fashion of this world passeth away (I Cor. 7:31).” “And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see (John 9:39).”

These passages indicate the present order of things. The natural course of events is evil. The spirit of the times will never lead us toward heaven. The human soul will never find what God intends it should possess unless through Christ. We accept what God alone can give us. We need guidance. We are as helpless as a ship without compass or Pole Star. The world cannot supply life's charts. Christ told His disciples to not only follow Him, but also learn of Him. Only such learning and constant fellowship can change our desires, motives, thoughts and acts from the course of the present evil order of things and the dark powers working contrary to good to the straight and narrow way which leadeth unto life. Broad is the course of this world which leadeth to destruction.

WHO IS YOUR PRINCE?

According to the prince of the power of the air: The evil world is organized. Satan is prince of evil powers. A theory was current in Paul's day that spirits had various abodes. The spirits of the lost descended and dwelt in darkness under the earth. Embodied spirits of mankind peopled the face of the earth. The air above the world of men but below the abode of angels was the haunt of evil, unholy spirits, which constantly sought to capture our imaginations, enslaving us and turning us from God. Angelic hosts dwelt far in the heavens.

There is some doubt as to whether Paul was acknowledging this viewpoint. It is more probable that he was cautioning his readers to beware of the personality of Satan, the leader of evil forces. His influence is too powerful to be minimized. As a prince organizes to rule his kingdom, so Satan, a living spirit of evil, organizes his powerful cohorts to oppose God. Christ and the apostles knew Satan was a

real, live, living personality. "Get thee behind me, Satan." His influence is powerful. Christ quoted Scripture to rid Himself of the tempter. Let us follow His example.

This personality of Satan was universally recognized in the early church. We must do likewise. The Old Testament says little of Satan, as such, while the New Testament issues constant warnings. Paul thus speaks to Elymus, the sorcerer, "Thou child of the devil, thou enemy of righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? (Acts 13:10)." "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them (II Cor. 4:4)." Christ sent Paul to the Gentiles "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me (Acts 26:18)." "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly (Rom. 16:20)." "To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also, for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes, forgave I it in the person of Christ; lest Satan should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices (II Cor. 2:10)." "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light (II Cor. 11:14)." "And then shall the wicked be revealed, who the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders (II Thess 2:8,9)." "Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I, Paul once and again; but Satan hindered us (I Thess. 2:18)." We dare not smile at the existence of Satan, or minimize his devastating power. While God knows whom we follow, Satan also knows. "The devil knows where I live." The two kingdoms of darkness and light are absolutely opposite. Christ said, "He that is not with me is against me." We are bound to God or Satan. The yoke of Christ is easy. "Take my yoke upon you."

LET YOUR EYES BE OPENED.

The spirit that now worketh: The Satan which "entered into Judas (Luke 22:3)" and led him to betray Christ, and that visited Ananias, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? (Acts 5:3)," is the same malign spirit of evil which now tempts us. "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life (Rev. 2:10)." "Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders (II Thess. 2:10)" is not satisfied with having control of the evil spirits of the air, he wishes to rule the hearts of men. The organization of the evil spirits are for the sole purpose of tempting men, causing their downfall, and leading them to disobey God. In order to resist "this spirit that now worketh" variously and with power, we must protect ourselves by putting on the whole armor of God and by being filled with the Spirit of wisdom. We are utterly incapable of resisting the spirit of evil until Christ dwells in our heart and gives us full fighting strength. Is this spirit now working in you? In many ways it is perilous to minimize or ignore the enemies' strength. The air is filled with germs of evil. Build up resistance. Have frequent spiritual examinations. Sin is a malarial poison. "My soul, be on thy guard."

OUR RELATIONSHIPS.

In the children of disobedience: While we are all children of God, we can, through the exercise of self-will, unbelief, obstinate opposition to God's will, and continued resistance to His leading, become children of disobedience, temporarily severed from connection with our Heavenly Father. We need to constantly guard against this alien state of our affections. Like one caught in the sweep of an outgoing tide we drift further and further from the Father's love and home. The devil takes advantage of our weak nature and tries to inflame us against God and create a state of constant rebellion. If we yield

to these temptations we become the children of disobedience, for our conduct bears the mark of being a son of Satan. Sin is disobedience, implicit, explicit, patent and latent. Sin is an act in direct opposition to the will of God. It is self-determined. You can't blame someone else for your disobedience. While we inherit a sinful nature, we can't blame this inherent desire or hereditary tendency on others than ourself. We must blame ourselves for yielding to temptation and turning our face from God. We are children of God as long as we live in the Father's presence and live as sons of God, but when we choose a course of continued habitual, obstinate, unbelieving, disobedient opposition to God, we are children of Satan. Let us examine ourselves. Have we drifted away from our rightful standing as sons of God? Unbelief and disobedience are twins. God's wrath rests upon both. This anger can be pacified by faith. "For ye in time past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy (Rom. 11:30)." Today is the day of salvation. Come!

III.

GOD'S OPINION OF THOSE SPIRITUALLY DEAD

"Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others." —EPH. 2:3.

REMEMBER THE PAST.

Among whom also we all: Paul does not forget the time when he was spiritually dead. Jews and Gentiles were once children of disobedience. None stand on higher levels than others. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is not one righteous, no, not one. All must be saved by the grace of God if they are to be saved at all. The status of Paul was no different from that of his converts. The life of the Ephesians, surrounded by idolatry and evils of an eastern mercantile city may have differed from Paul's cultured religious environment, but both were lost until Christ found them. Before Paul saw Christ, and the Ephesians heard Paul, both, as sons of disobedience led by the spirit of evil, were under the wrath of God. All faced the same condemnation until they accepted Christ's full free offer of pardon and forgiveness. The memory of our yesterdays is humbling.

HOW WONDERFUL IS THE SALVATION OF JESUS.

Had our conversation in times past: How important is speech! How much of our life it reveals. Words, like surface croppings of coal, reveal the hidden mind. The world can tell whether we are lost or saved, by our conversation. Christ wanted His disciples to confess Him before men. The church needs the sanctifying experience of testimony. Let us watch our words. "Ye also shall be witnesses (John 15:

27).” “For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward (II Cor. 1:12).” The foul fountain needs some outside hand to perform a cleansing rite if its waters is to be pure. Our lips need to be touched by the Spirit of God if the words of our mouth and the meditations of our hearts, by their wisdom and praise, are to be acceptable to Him. He can take away cursing, foulness, blasphemy, lying, deceit.

Never lose the backward look. Frequently people ashamed of humble origin are silent about their beginnings. A Christian saved by the grace of God needs to ever keep before Him the sin from which he was saved in order to glorify Him by a testimony capable of saving others. Some mission converts forget that remembering the past is to spur us on to the heights. A runner must press toward the goal.

THE CRAVINGS OF SIN.

In the lusts of our flesh: Lusts are strong desires, — not necessarily craving for wrong or evil desires. Generally, lusts are sinful, sensual desires controlled by the world, the flesh and the devil. Christ has honorable desires. “With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer (Luke 22:15).” The same commendable word appears in I Tim. 3:1: “If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.” But Paul is thinking of desires or lusts of the old fallen nature. “For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death (Rom. 7:5).” Any yielding to this old self and any habitual living on this lower level leads to future spiritual death. “For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing (Rom. 7:19).” Only the power of God can change death into life. “So we walk not after the flesh but after the spirit (Rom. 8:4).” The word “flesh” is evidently physical and signifies the state of our natural and unregenerate being, self-centered, sinful and opposing good. Temptation appeals largely to the fleshly life. Our humanness does not excuse indulgence.

YIELDING TO SATAN.

Fulfilling the desires of the flesh: Satan causes us to not only long for but to actually yield to the desires of the flesh. He allows our lower natures to predominate and sin to control. "We follow the bent of the unregenerate ego." Christianity must be more than philosophy. It promises rebirth and change of desire. Only such a change prevents fulfilling the wishes of the flesh. "I am carnal, sold under sin (Rom. 7:14)." "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh, for the flesh lust against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh and they are contrary the one to the other (Gal. 5:16, 17)."

And of the mind: This sin is one of perverted, unholy imagination rather than act. Its origin is in thought; a few acts may be spontaneous, but the majority originate in the mind. "For out of the heart proceedeth evil thoughts (Mark 15:19)." Let us pray that God will cause us to think in our hearts as we should live in our lives.

CHRIST IS NEEDED.

And were by nature the children of wrath: We are not children of environment. The spirit of evil is around us but our nature is sinful. "A Jew is by nature (Gal. 2:15)." Circumstances about us play their part, but our nature has first responsibility. Our condition is due to inward wrong. Original sin is not a matter of nationality. It covers all mankind. In spite of all of God's covenants and promises, in spite of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross and the power of God's Holy Spirit, man's nature still yields to the wiles of the tempter. Each must say, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Each must choose darkness or light, the will of God or the will of man, God's authority or the perverted judgment of Satan. A moment ago we spoke of sin causing us to become children of disobedience. As penalty for such departure, we become children of wrath, exposed morally and mentally to the wrath of God by our acts of disobedience—a child of wrath as one is a child by natural descent. This is neither indignation or

revenge. It is justice; law has been broken and penalty needs to be imposed. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18)." "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression (Rom. 4:15)." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him (John 3:36)." "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him (Rom. 5:9)."

NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN US.

Even as others: A true Christian has no superiority complex. Righteousness allows no pedestal. Grace saves from a terrible catastrophe. Salvation is not man planned or man executed, but Divinely worked and given. Though man was created for fellowship with God, all were lost until Jesus saved. Paul includes himself with fellow Jewish and Gentile converts. Let us do likewise. We either have the nature of Christ or Satan—if of Christ, there is no cause for boasting for He has given it to us; if of the evil one, we cannot save ourselves, so need to humbly appeal for Divine mercy.

IV.

THE WEALTH OF GOD'S MERCY

*"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love where-
with he loved us."* —EPH. 2:4.

MAN'S SALVATION.

But God: The first three verses of this chapter paint a very dark picture of man's past condition by nature—living under the influence of evil spirits, and doing what is contrary to the wish of God. Beginning with this verse, we have a brighter picture of man's present condition by grace. It is as though man, despairing of his condition, feeling helpless in the fate which surrounds him, turns in his extremity toward God instead of plunging toward an inevitable ruin. Divine mercy saves him for a glorious eternity. It is always darkest before the dawn. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help (Hos. 13:9)." How much more practical Christianity is than other world religions. The Christians' God not only appeals to him to live on a high plane but gives him power to realize his ideals and ambitions. He receives strength to enable him in God's name to overcome his weaknesses. Whenever man, in his despair, realizes the failure of his present or future, these two words always bring comfort—"BUT GOD." Man would be driven to self-destruction, but God gives him new life; habits enslave mankind, but God frees him from their bondage! Man lives for self but God directs him to serve others and find joy and happiness; the soul of man would be eternally lost, but God, thanks to the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ, rescues him from his peril and lifts him to heavenly places.

OUR SALVATION THROUGH GOD'S MERCY.

Who is rich in mercy: Paul speaks of God as "the Father of mercies (II Cor. 1:3)." Micah characterizes God as One

who "delights in mercy (7:18)." David prays to the Lord "to blot out his transgression according to the multitude of his tender mercies (Psa. 51:1)." Paul assures us, that "the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him (Rom. 10:12)." Psa. 103:8-11 would satisfy any doubter as to the quality of Divine mercy, who "hath not dealt with us after our sins nor rewarded us according to our iniquities, for the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy." Rom. 9:23 assures us that God makes known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He had prepared unto glory. I Pet. 1:3 is a hymn of praise to God who "according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Titus 3:5 takes away any particle of a feeling of self-righteousness which we might have, by assuring us that "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, the renewing of the Holy Ghost." All of these verses merely sound the depth of Divine compassion which comes from free choice rather than obligation on the part of God toward His creatures. God desires to save to the uttermost all who come unto Him. How freely, having no claim by good deeds upon His mercy, we are assured that He will abundantly pardon even though provoked, seventy times seven by transgressions on our part.

There is no uncertainty concerning the availability of God's mercy to every seeking soul. His mercy endures forever and ever, His mercy cannot be changed from its purpose by any sin other than the unpardonable sin. How beautiful was David's love for his son, Absalom. After this boy had violated every claim for affection, after mistake had followed mistake, and intrigue and treachery had supplanted love, Absalom dies. The sorrowing father forgot the heart-aches of past years, the disappointment over his ungrateful and scheming son, and cries in his bereavement "Absalom, my son." If this were true of David, the son of man, how great must be the compassion and mercy of God and the Divine Son of God for erring children. "He that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

A MIRACLE OF DIVINE LOVE.

For his great love: Paul waxes eloquent as he thinks of God's kindness to him. God has expressed Himself in mercy, love, grace, and kindness through Christ. How great and wonderful is this love. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8)." God is Love. Love is the foundation of mercy. Love is the motive which directs acts of mercy. It was God's love for the world that caused Him to send His only begotten Son into the world, that all who believed on Him might have life (John 3:16). Love is the only way God has of saving our soul. Sin is repugnant to God. The very sight and thought of sin repels, but love for us overcomes this feeling of aversion, and through Christ, we are assured of the fullest expression of His love to supply our various needs. God distinguishes between sin and sinner. He hates sin, but loves the sinner. God's love to the earth is spoken of as "strong as death itself." Gen. 31:3 gives love an everlasting quality—"I have loved thee with an everlasting love." Mal. 3:6 defines this love as being unchanging—"I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Rom. 8:39 gives it an invisible quality—nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." God's love extends to every creature, every living soul on earth. He loved those who were responsible for His death on the Cross and could not finish His work until He had prayed the Father for forgiveness for their sin. His ascension toward heaven did not end this love which continues to the present. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men (Titus 2:11)." According to I Timothy: "We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe (4:10)."

GOD LOVES EVEN ME.

Wherewith he loved us: One needs to have a vivid imagination to obtain the full beauty of passages like this. Each word has its own importance and emphasis. The "us," of

course, refers to the new church which is the body of Christ composed of all sincere Christians who wish to make Christ real in their lives. But the personal pronoun "us" is Paul's way of remembering what God has done for him. We must always appropriate God's love personally, for God, who is rich in mercy loves even me. Sin separated us from the love of God; selfishness, self-will, sensuality and sin always separate, but love extends mercy, and mercy brings us near to the heart of God. It was love for God's chosen people that caused Him to guide them out of the land of Egypt toward the Promised Land. It was mercy which continued that forty year leadership in spite of idolatrous worship and breaking of law. Let us pray, "Have mercy upon me, O Lord." Pray in faith believing that we shall receive according to the promises. He loves me even unto death.

V.

THE BELIEVER'S UNION WITH CHRIST

"Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)." —EPH. 2:5.

GOD SEEKS THE LOST.

Even when: It is astonishing how many verses in Paul's letters begin with prepositions and conjunctions. Paul is exact. He wants us to remember the dark when basking in sunshine. When clouds are heavy he would have us anticipate the sun; in moments of sorrow, to recall His favor; and in days of happiness, to remember that tears may follow. Where sin abounds, grace even more abounds. Where there is a Savior there is power to keep. God's love and mercy is expressed toward us when we were incapable of turning toward God. "Even when" spiritually dead, "even when" still living in a far country, "even when" prodigals from our Father's house, "even when" alienated from the affections of our Heavenly Parent and devoid of gratitude, even then He did not turn from us or wait for us to move toward Him, but He came a seeking Savior, to seek and to save those who are lost and reclaim dead, lifeless, inactive, unconscious, and decayed souls to new spiritual life and beauty.

THE DEATH WE LEAVE.

We were dead in sins: When God commanded Adam to abstain from eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, He prophesied that "the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Gen. 2:17)." Adam did eat, and physically lived for hundreds of years but his soul was dead. His consciousness was no longer alive to delicate responsibility to God. The condition in which Adam found himself after having eaten of the fruit of that forbidden tree is sim-

ilar to our own condition when we live for everything except God. We talk fluently about business, science, sports, social activity and our neighbors, but our tongues are tied when it comes to describing individual experiences of God's mercy toward us. We live for what is hateful and intolerable to Him. How readily we spend every ounce of energy for the possession and enjoyment of things purely physical and remain inert and unconscious of the presence of God. Our decision to serve Him lacks energy to obey. God looks down on a world of whirling machinery, humanity frantically moving to and fro, seeking, seeking, seeking, they know not what. The whole gamut of human emotions is being played upon, but He sees a cemetery. On every unbelieving heart He sees written "dead through sin."

This idea of spiritual death is not new. We speak of those who live on low levels as being dead to finer things. They are animal in their desires and satisfactions. Little things easily satisfy them. Paul is speaking of those who are dead in sins. The plural is significant. To some, sin is like a single poisoned dart aimed directly at the heart. Spiritual death is immediate. Others are wounded, their system is poisoned and their loss of spiritual life is a lingering process. Sin follows sin until they no longer think of, wish for, or strive to please God. The natural visible world shuts out vision of an invisible spiritual realm. God lives and moves and has His being in a spiritual world. He cannot live in a sinful world.

One of the signs of death is inactivity. A dead body is a still body. The features are like marble. There is no expression, enthusiasm, or consciousness. A dead soul loses all sense of movement toward God. The constant neglect of means of grace does for the human heart what neglect does for the finest cutting tools, makes it incapable of further labor. One of the consequences of death is decay, decomposition, and complete change of form. That which is dead cannot revive and live. Sin kills, sin deprives the sinner of a place in heaven, sin causes a crumbling away of good resolves and a falling apart of noble purposes. Fallen humanity is as loathsome as a body which has decayed.

Paul gives us an unusual picture. A man can be half dead and half alive. His physical life teems with vitality but his spiritual life is paralyzed. His body responds to light, heat, air, rest, exercise, but his spirit is insensible to prayer, faith, love, service and compassion. Sins have separated the sinner from God.

A great many today would gloss sin. We want to remove anything which jars our nerves. It is unpleasant to think of, or speak of sin as a fatal poison in our veins, or as a disease which kills. Facts are cold. Christ came into a dead world in order to raise us as living souls with Him—alive to God and living on the bread of life.

Thought progresses from this lifeless picture to one full of hope and attraction. How pathetic is a tree severed from its roots, lying dead and lifeless on the soil intended to nourish it. How inspiring is a tree which branches into beauty and buries itself into the soil from which come nourishment and strength. How repellent is a heap of ashes without warmth, life and color. How satisfying are embers and a flickering blaze to one who is cold and lonely. Christ is Life and Light. Christ, who burst the bounds of Joseph's tomb will roll away the stone from our resting place and call us to live with Him.

HIS LIFE IS OURS.

Hath quickened us: Instead of being dead to Him we become dead to selfishness and sin. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself (John 5:24, 26)." It is glorious to think of Christ freed from the bonds of the tomb, living an unhindered life of service for all who call upon Him. We should glory in the Cross of Christ but our eyes are not to remain upon the figure hanging on the Cross. His blood was shed for the remission of our sins, but it is a living Christ who moves with us and inspires the church. Lazarus came forth

from the tomb, quickened. The Savior, leaving in the grave the clothes which bound Him, stepped out into the garden a quickened body; this Lord quickens us when we come from the bondage of sin. "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses (Col. 2:13)." "He that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live." "He that believeth in me shall never die." Is it any wonder the centurian beholding the body of Jesus on the Cross exclaimed, "Truly this was the Son of God"? Early martyrs felt the quickening power of the ascended Savior and were willing to give their life and their all in sacrificing loyalty to this Christ. Jesus can quicken a church which works with sensitive consciences guided internally by the whispers of an indwelling Savior and externally by the power of God's Spirit. Such a church can possess Pentecostal fervor and possibilities.

The change which takes place when a sinner is saved or a man is born again or becomes conscious of God's indwelling Presence; the change in me when I know Jesus is mine and I am reconciled to my God, is as dramatic as when Lazarus stepped forth from his tomb to the amazement of those who despaired of ever seeing him again. The life lost by sin is restored by conversion to fellowship with God. When a soul is quickened it does two things. First, it gives itself to Him and second, it finds life for itself. "I am come that ye might pass from death to life, that ye might be grafted into the body of Christ. I am come that ye might have life and have it more abundantly." The quickening restores the life lost by sin; the dead soul mocks at sin; the quickened soul sees sin; it knows there is a hell to be shunned and a heaven to be possessed. This life of Christ is made available to us by putting our trust in Him, by believing on Him, by placing confidence in His promises, and by allowing ourselves to have fellowship with His Spirit after emptying ourselves of all that self has placed there. Such a quickening is a very definite act. There is no doubt about it. During the winter it is sometimes difficult to know whether a branch is alive or dead but in the springtime when all life is burst-

ing, the doubt is soon removed. The branch which grows, develops and reaches toward the sun, has life. The soul which reaches toward God has life.

UNION WITH CHRIST.

Together with Christ: Paul never wants to go far from his Savior. He is like a child unafraid—with his parent. Christ knows the way, Paul does not. Throughout all life's experiences, he clings to the Savior who is more than life to him. As he describes the Gentile Christian's method of salvation, identical with ours, he keeps us to the point—we are quickened with Christ. We are accepted by God with Christ, we have spiritual triumph and power with Christ, when we finish our task in a manner pleasing to God, we shall be with Christ and when we reign forever we shall be with Christ. "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live (John 11:25, 26)." "As Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4)." "Because I live, ye shall live also (John 14:19)." "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses (Col. 2:13)." "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory (Col. 3:4)." What a reward for all the sacrifices, or so-called sacrifices—eternity together with Christ!

We all know that Christ died. That is a historical fact. We also know that until we come in contact with Him, we are dead to all that God would have us be. Christ's resurrection was attested by many witnesses. Because He lives we shall live. This life begins after He comes and makes His abode with us. The weak and impotent were brought to Christ for healing. Christ might have cured them in their own homes but He gave friends the satisfaction of seeing a miracle performed. Today, we cry, "Lord, save me or I perish," or we open the Bible to any one of the promises and

cry, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief," we kneel at the altar or commune with God in the secret of our own closets. However it is done, the change from a state of death to life is "together with Christ."

FROM DEATH TO LIFE.

By grace are ye saved: This parenthetical clause is like an Amen. Salvation comes from the grace of God, and not from good works. The literal meaning of the verb is "we have been saved," that is, we were saved by the act of God. God's part of our salvation has been completed; our part is in constant process of development and will not reach the full measure of completion until the future. "For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed (Rom. 13:11)." "By which also ye are saved if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you (I Cor. 15:2)."

We are sometimes confused by the past, present and future tenses of our salvation. We fail to distinguish between God's work and our own, between the gift which has been set aside and the gift to be accepted and used. Salvation is to be a present possession. Let us not forget "our election is by grace (Rom. 11:5)." "Our calling is by grace (II Tim. 1:9)." "Our acceptance is by grace (Eph. 1:6)." We have been saved by a past act of God's grace. "For by grace ye are saved and not of yourself (Rom. 5:8)." "It is God who has quickened us. We are born from above (John 3:3)." "We are a new creation (II Cor. 5:17)." We are being saved. We grow in grace day by day as a tree increases in size. A pine is a pine whether it is three inches tall or a hundred feet tall; a church is saved whether it has been saved three hours or a decade. Our spiritual life begins with sorrow, repentance and realization of how far we have fallen short of the glory of God. It ends with joy, power and salvation. Christ raises us to sit in heavenly places. We will be saved in the ages to come when we pass beyond the veil and live forever with Him.

It is rather significant that the word "grace" (meaning the free, undeserved favor of God), is used one hundred and fifty-six times in the New Testament.

VI.

THE BELIEVER'S REIGN

"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." —EPH. 2:6.

THE ASCENSION OF THE SOUL.

And hath raised us up together: The resurrection of Christ is described in Chap. 1:20. Having burst the bounds of Joseph's tomb, Jesus is set on the right hand of God in heavenly places; and now the believer, having been quickened with Christ, is raised with Christ. Two different interpretations may be given; — 1, a union with the Lord, the church being united with Jesus; and 2, a union with the church. The resurrection and ascension of the Son of God are certainly bases of all spiritual and bodily relations of the church. The resurrection of Christ was not complete until His ascension into heaven. The quickening of the believer to new spiritual consciousness with an indwelling Christ is not complete until he, in the fulness of time, lives with Christ where He is. "Ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead (Col. 2:12)." God's power operating in the tomb of Joseph to resurrect Christ demonstrates itself in the life of the sinner by changing him into the new man, alive to do the bidding of his Master. He walks in new light according to the life of Christ. This new relationship when established, is so vital, that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus or from a resurrection and ascension experience with Christ. Hope in this future. It beckons us on. The sight of this goal gives heart and gradually creates a desire completely to fulfill the command of Christ in Matthew: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect (5:48)."

We not only have union with Christ but because of that union we enter into a more perfect union with each other. It is impossible to live in harmony with Christ and be at discord with our fellows. There may be persecution for righteousness' sake but nevertheless, the thought of Christ's life will make us rise above pettiness and dissension.

THE BELIEVER'S REIGN.

And made us sit together: Two promises are given to us in this verse. (1) We are raised with Christ. This would be honor and glory sufficient in itself, but Divine measure is always pressed down and overflowing. (2) We are made to sit together with Christ "who sitteth on the right hand of God (Col. 3:1)." We are not only united with Him and all believers in life, but we are united with both in life eternal. We will not have lowly places in heaven to contemplate and worship the Divine Son of God who has purchased us with His life and redeemed us by His blood, we are to sit beside Him, sharing with Him the glory of His victories and the honor which comes from His rule over all principalities, realms and powers.

The gloriousness of this sitting together is best understood by examining the Greek word which is also used in Luke 22:55 to describe Christ before the high priest. Peter follows from a distance. The night was cold; curious on-lookers kindled a fire in the open court to warm themselves while waiting for whatever might transpire. Following Oriental custom, they did not build a large bonfire which drives away those seeking its warmth, but a small blaze around which they might closely gather and absorb warmth. Having kindled such a fire, the group "sat down together" and Peter sat down with them. This intimate compact circle is a picture of the way we shall "sit together with Him." Between us there shall flow the common understanding of perfect friends instead of the fear, suspicion, doubt and dis-interest present in the outer court among those waiting for Jesus' trial.

We shall not only sit with Him, we also reign with Him.

"God hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father (Rev. 1:6)." This is a natural consequence. Christ is the Head of the body. The living redeemed members of the church are the living body of Christ. As the Head of the body sits on the right hand of God, the Father, the body also should be sitting with the Head.

The past tense is used to describe what God has done for those who give their lives into His hands. God's part is completed. He has quickened, He has raised, He has made us sit together with Him. That is, when God quickened, raised and elevated His Son, He also symbolically performed a similar service for all who believe in the Son. The believers may be present, past or future, but whatever may be the tense of the believers's acceptance of this gift of God, it is certain we wait for full possession of God's gift until we shall be like Him and with Him. "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:12, 13)."

This ultimate perfection of the believer is not understood by many. Some claim perfection, the moment they are reborn; others seek to become more and more perfect by imitating Christ. Perfection consists of taking each day's tasks and with the help of God, living as sinless as possible with the guidance of His Spirit. The Scripture frequently calls followers of Christ "little children"—children in their ignorance and understanding of God's wisdom and children respecting their likeness to God. A child in the kindergarten may receive a perfect mark and yet, how little that child knows of the higher learning to be gained in the successive stages from kindergarten to university. So in the life of the Christian perfection is not attained in completeness until we enter into the joy of our inheritance. Day by day we grow in grace and knowledge of God and in favor with God and man. As Dr. Scofield expressed it, "Perfection implies full development, growth in maturity, conscience and sinless per-

fection." "For our conversation is in heaven: from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself (Phil. 3:20, 21)."

HIS EXALTATION IS OURS.

In heavenly places in Christ Jesus: Though Paul was a Roman citizen, he never lost sight of the fact that his citizenship was in heaven. While his lungs were daily purified by the air of earth, his soul was cleansed by the breath of heaven. He daily drank the atmosphere of Christ. He leaned frequently upon Luke, the beloved physician, and those loving messages of churches he had established which ministered to his bodily needs, and yet, his true fellowship was with those who dwelt in heavenly places—the unseen angels who ministered to him and the unseen Savior who guided him safely through storm and peril. He frequently found himself in dark dungeons and damp prisons yet he was never depressed by these surroundings because his spirit lifted him above the things of this earth. He was already an heir of the riches found in heavenly places. He shared the spiritual exaltation of the group in the upper room who gathered with Christ to institute the Holy Supper. How unconscious they were of the tragic events so soon to transpire. Two men on the road to Emmaus were forgetful of the lateness of the day as they became engrossed in conversation with a friend found on the way. The three who witnessed the glorification of the Son of man on the Mount of Transfiguration were unmindful of the tragedies through which they had recently passed; they were lifted from earthly things to heavenly places. If a true union with Christ exists, if our religion is more than a name on a communicants' roll, and if the name Christian does more than distinguish us from heathen, we, even on earth, shall be lifted in devotion and prayer to be in heavenly places with Him.

What dramatic changes are suggested in the opening verses of this chapter. We are children of disobedience but God

has made us sit in heavenly places; we were dead in sin but He has quickened us into new life in Christ Jesus; we were children of wrath having broken the commandments of God and gone about our own way, but now we have become sons of obedience, joint-heirs with Christ; we have been citizens of the earth, now we have become citizens of heaven; we formerly experienced misery, but now, by the mercy of God, we have heaven surrounding us. Why? Because God who is rich in mercy, without limit in His love, has willed that we, made in His image, should sit with His only begotten Son and share with Him the glory surrounding Him; we shall be exalted with Christ, having power to rise above the trivial circumstances of our lives, no longer living in the low levels of selfishness, self-interest, and self-righteousness, but having intimate fellowship and friendship with angels and the redeemed instead of being degraded with Satan's forces of evil.

In summarizing these blessings, remember Christ brings us close to God. As members of His body we share what God has given His Son. The fulness of our life, the completeness of our salvation and the hope of our glorification are all through Christ Jesus. Without Christ we would be without our present spiritual standing and the absolute certainty of future resurrection and exaltation with Christ.

VII.

THE EXCEEDING RICHES OF GOD'S GRACE

"That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."
—EPH. 2:7.

GOD'S ETERNITY.

That in the ages to come: God's plan is of such glorious dimensions as to cover all depth, length, height and breadth of space. The New Testament speaks of various periods needed in God's great providence to develop great truths. Paul is thinking of that indefinite, unknown future period of time extending from the date of his writing to the end of the world or all future ages of the church, all future members of the church, all the ages of gospel preaching which follow the Apostolic age, and all periods in the future development of God's plan of the ages. The earthly life of the human race is but a dot in comparison with that endless eternity which stretches into the dim future. All races of mankind in all future ages are included in His redeeming purpose and are invited to share His boundless wealth. From the beginning of time this was in the mind of the Creator.

The New Testament, however, always distinguishes between this age and the coming age or the age of the world to come. Of this age, Matthew tells us that "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruits, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this; the servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay: lest

while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn (13:24-30)." The field is the world. Christians are good seed. Children of the wicked one are tares. "And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful (Mark 4:19)." Mark adds (10:30) men will receive a hundredfold reward in this life, but in the world to come eternal life. Romans cautions us not to be conformed to this world. "And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God (12:2)." Second Corinthians (4:4) warns us "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is image of God, should shine unto them." Galatians (1:4) is clear. Christ gave Himself "for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and of the Father." Paul in (II Tim. 4:10) laments that "Demas hath forsaken me having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica," while Titus (2:12) urges us "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

Matthew pictures the coming ages as "at the end of this world, when angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just (13:24)." In the same Gospel, (24:1-13) Christ answers His disciples' request for signs of the coming end of the world, and comforts us (28:20) with the assurance that He will be with us until the end of this world. Luke adds, "the righteous shall receive life everlasting in the world to come (18:30)." In Chap. 20:35, 36 we are cautioned "those counted worthy to attain that world and resurrection neither marry nor are given in marriage. They are equal with angels and are the children of God being the children of the resurrection." "But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his

coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power (I Cor. 15: 23, 24).” “Christ is King of the ages (II Tim. 1:17).”

GOD’S GRACE MANIFESTED.

He might shew: These periods of time which utterly defy imagination are not without purpose. These ages are to show various orders of being and angelic hosts the great power and glory of God. The Lord will always have witnesses for Himself throughout the long distance of eternal future. All unborn races of mankind, all future ages are inheritors of Christ’s redeeming purpose and share in the exceeding riches of His grace and goodness. Every sinner saved by grace is to shew forth the glory of God. “Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting (I Tim. 1:36).” However, glorious are the evidences of God’s transforming power in the heart of man, the fairest flowers bloom on the other shore, and the sweetest fruits ripen in the other world.

HIS RICHES ARE INEXHAUSTIBLE.

The exceeding riches: God’s wealth is without limit. Its riches are so stupendous as to defy description. One can only gaze at the Matterhorn in worshipful silence. It is impossible to ever circumnavigate God’s riches. The total needs of man, all that sinful mankind will ever draw from the love of God is so small in comparison with the greatness of His love as to leave no impression. As well might a person take a teaspoonful of water from the sea and expect to note any difference in its volume, as to think man can ever lessen the love of an infinite God.

God’s exceeding riches are best shown by His mercy to sinners. The grossest sinner is encouraged to come and find mercy. What God has done in the past and what He is doing for some, He will do for all. What He is doing

now He will do forever. Lydia and the Philippian jailer are outstanding examples of the grace of God in human life. The riches of God's grace are demonstrated by the fact that man's salvation is not by works but by the gift of God. Man cannot save himself. God stoops down and rescues him from his peril in spite of his unbelief and ungraciousness. The record of God's grace is best contained in the historical narratives of the Bible. Its manifestations are found in the hearts yielded to Him.

The riches of God wait for desire in the heart of the believer. A generous deposit may be to their account and from this day they can draw. Some appropriate more than others. The Psalmist was inspired to write many beautiful choral pieces for temple-worship because of the riches of God's mercy and affection. It will also be our redemption theme. We do not merely absorb great, eternal truths, delve into the philosophy of human life and make a study of comparative relations but by the grace of God we are saved to glory in His glory, power, wisdom, mercy and grace. Paul testifies of this wealth after returning from one of his hazardous missionary journeys. He needed to face perils, trials, doubts, and fears before the exceeding riches of God could be understood, appreciated, and appropriated.

UNDESERVED FAVOR.

Of his grace: A little girl once defined "grace" as "getting everything for nothing." Another adds, "Grace is what is received by one who deserves everything bad but gets everything good." Henry Drummond calls love the greatest thing in the world. The Bible makes grace the greatest thing in the world. Dr. Jowett, famous English preacher, declared himself unable to comprehend the wondrous grace of God which causes its recipients to become gracious, changes them from the repulsion of evil habits to winsome charm, from ill-will to good-will, from hate to lovingkindness. We are saved by grace, not by works. The heart of Christ is the supreme expression of God's grace. The gospel is the message of His grace. Every Christian is a channel through which this grace is to flow. Upon becoming a disciple, he auto-

matically becomes a mediator of Divine grace. The charm of Christ lies in that being rich, yet for our sakes, He became poor that we might be rich in the possession of everlasting life.

Parental love contains sacrifice, yet, back of it there exists instinctive duty to a child. Grace, however, is free from any such claim. It is unearned and unmerited favor which can stoop in lowly condescension. It is always from God to man, from Savior to sinner, and from heights of purity to depths of sin. The grace of God is always free, bubbling from the fountain of God's heart. His grace stoops to the frail and weak and gives in generous bounty all that man can appropriate from infinite stores. All of God is made available for all of man and all men. God's grace is shown in His effective help. He saves to the uttermost, saves completely. There is no flaw or unfinished work. The grace of God is always inseparably linked with mercy and love. The grace of God is so inexhaustible that nothing man can do will drive God from him. Whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

GRACE DEMONSTRATED.

In his kindness: Grace is a quality of the heart. Kindness is one of its expressions. Kindness, as a rule, is related to some useful service or gift. God's kindness is always directed toward the feeble, suffering and struggling. God hates disobedience and sin, but in spite of His hatred for Satan, his hosts and their work in man, in the softness of His heart, in the richness of His mercies, He looks down in kindness instead of wrath and in pity gives His angels charge over His wayward children. "Despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? (Rom. 2:4)."

The kindness of God is expressed in His blessings. Though Jacob had obtained his blessing by deceit, his father continued to honor his word. God, in spite of our shortcomings, calls us His children, forgives us freely and causes His face to shine upon us and be gracious unto us. His kindness is expressed toward us as directly as toward the thief

on the cross, the woman who had greatly sinned, Peter who denied Him thrice, or Saul who breathed threats and curses against the early Christians. His kindness provides for every contingency in the whole gamut of our needs. His kindness is for ever and ever.

EVEN ME!

Toward us: The exceeding riches of God are intended for all made in His image and all for whom Christ died—even for us. The pronoun “epi” used here indicates that blessings come upon us not merely as a light shower after an extended drought, but as heavy showers adequate to our needs. These blessings from above are pressed down and overflowing. Our testimony describes what God has done for us. Many hymns have been composed in an effort to express thanksgiving for His saving grace. Heaven could bring no pleasure to Christ or the redeemed without this daily expression of Divine favor. Sinless souls are to be companions for a sinless fruit in due season. Is our heart stone? Unless God’s gifts develop our hearts and minds to be future sinless companions to His Son. Are we responding? The sun shines on the stone as well as the bursting seed; one remains a stone, the other absorbs energy, stirs into expanding life and bears fruit in due season. Is our heart stone, Unless God’s gifts toward us develop Christian graces, they fail in their purpose. Christ’s death on the Cross becomes useless unless it is appropriated in our life and manifested in us. God’s finger points first to His precious promises and then to us for acceptance. A physical universe shows God’s wonderful power—the turning of night into day and day into night—the march of the seasons—the ebb and flow of the tide—the laws of the physical universe, each and all testify of Him, but only the moral universe demonstrates His grace and kindness.

CHRIST THE DOOR.

Through Christ Jesus: Some translations read “in Christ Jesus.” Everything comes through Christ as the channel and through Him as Mediator. If there be any doubt as to our

gifts through Christ, read Rom. 5:15-18. It is only through Christ that God is preparing the church as His Bride. It is only through Christ, the Head of the mystical body that the church shall some day reign with Him. It is only through Christ that our prayers receive favor. It is only through Christ that we obtain that vital union needed to carry out God's purposes in us.

Throughout all the letters of Paul, this union with Christ is a central theme. We receive assurance of the Father's love through Christ. We appeal to God through Christ. Many an answered prayer can be started effectively on its journey, if uttered in the name of Christ to the glory of God.

VIII.

MAN'S ONLY HOPE

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." —EPH. 2:8.

This verse gives us three of the most important words in the New Testament—grace, salvation and faith. These words remind us of man's greatest need for God's greatest gift. Paul has been describing man's condition without Christ, as dead in sin and unable to do anything toward producing life or free himself from the condemnation of his guilt. He looks into heavenly places and sees the power of God expressed through Christ, and the inheritance of the saints; he looks out upon the world with its struggling humanity and sees the church of the living God rising to reflect the glory of the New Jerusalem which needs no physical worshipping church. The Lord God is the Temple.

THE SOURCE.

For by grace: Paul looks to heaven before he turns toward earth to review fellow-Christians struggling for the light. He is absolutely sure that only the unlimited, undeserved favor of an all-loving God graciously giving all of Himself to all men and all of man, can possibly be responsible for the transformation of those submitting to God's leadership. The more God passes into man, the more man reaches out to appropriate through faith the gifts God has for him. The salvation of man cannot be attributed to anything in man, any works he may perform or any past transformation in his character. The salvation of a dead soul is that gracious act of God's sovereignty and Divine mercy which not only purposes to save man but succeeds in doing so. Some give Christ's great love as the reason for our salvation. We must

go back of Christ's love to God's love. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son (John 3:16)." God's love was the inspiration for all Christ's love and sacrifice. The grace of God is greater than the love of Christ. This grace is boundless love, freely expressed toward those who are entirely undeserving. Just as the sun, a gift of God, shines upon the just and unjust, the stone as well as waving fields of grain, ice as well as desert, so God's unfailing grace manifests itself toward those who respond and those who are dead toward Him. Love expresses God's desire; grace prompts the favor of God vocalized by some act of love. All grace is love, but all love may not necessarily be grace. Grace is goodwill and lovingkindness expressed toward an object loved, though unlovely.

A GIFT OF GOD.

Are ye saved: Some translate "ye have been saved"—meaning—"not will be," or "in course of being," but "we are in a saved state." God has planned everything. The door is open. There are the three tenses in salvation—present, past and future. In a certain sense, we work out our own salvation and do not receive complete salvation until freed from the snare of the tempter and death. Paul and members of the Ephesian church were progressing day by day toward perfection. For illustration take a wreck at sea. The ocean is filled with fragments of wreckage and passengers struggling to cling to that which might save them. Drowning men are lifted into a lifeboat. In one sense, being in a lifeboat, saves from a watery grave and yet, a more agonizing death through starvation and exposure may be waiting, unless the life boat carries all safely to a nearby vessel or port. A lost man who accepts Christ as a personal Savior is lifted into a lifeboat. Life is passage in a lifeboat. Death delivers us into the harbor from which we never more depart. John (5:24) tells us we have passed from death into life when we pass from spiritual death into spiritual life or from mortality into immortality. The early church had a test: "We know that we have passed from death into life because we

love the brethren (I John 3:14).” We are saved from disease, sorrow, accusing conscience, the fear of physical death, and the penalty of our sin. The cry of Peter voicing physical necessity, “Lord, save us lest we perish” was nothing in comparison with Christ’s delivery from the wrath to come and judgment for our sins. “Thou shalt call his name JESUS for he shall save his people from their sins (Matt. 1:21).” “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved (John 3:17).”

Salvation is a gift obtained by faith: “He that believeth on the Son of God hath eternal life.” The first century Christians believed they were saved the moment they accepted Christ. Nothing could shake that belief. They were willing to endure hardships, conscious that death could not separate them from their Savior; no persecution however bitter could separate them from their love of God. No wonder the church grew and prospered and the good news spread throughout the world. They were building upon a solid foundation. Their life had no doubt or trembling uncertainty but a positive and absolute conviction that Christ had saved them and could save to the uttermost all who came to the Father by Him.

Christ came to a lost, helpless world. The Parable of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, the Prodigal Son, and the certain doom of the house built upon sand, all emphasize the lost condition of man. Christ came to seek and save those that were lost.

THE CONDITION OF SALVATION.

Through faith: This sentence begins by describing the grace of God without which there could be no salvation. We now learn that only by faith, trust and absolute dependence upon God, can we receive the gift of salvation, His precious promises and power to triumph over the sin which so easily besets. “For whosoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith (I John 5:4).”

To some, even the faith which grasps the promise is a gift of God; we could not even trust God unless God Himself gave us the faith to do so. We know our confidence in God is our hope. It is not a question of our worthiness or unworthiness, it is a question of our absolute trust in Him. "God justifieth the believing man not for the worthiness of his belief but for the worthiness of him in whom he believeth."

Faith brought healing to the sick and deliverance from the burden of sin in the days of Christ; our faith can make us whole. Faith comes from hearing the Word of God, from discovering its message to us. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Rom. 10:17)."

Regardless of what God has planned for us and the boundless nature of His love, if our hearts do not open, we will die in our guilt. A kind friend may bring ample provision to the door of a starving man, but unless the famished man accept the gift and eat, he will die with food beside his bed. The grace of God brings the resources of heaven to us. If we refuse to accept the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, we cannot be saved. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all (Rom. 4:16)." "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? (Rom. 10:14)." Romans (4:16; 10:14-17) makes it very clear that faith cannot pride itself upon laying hold of what God has to offer. All glory belongs to God. Faith unites man and God and causes him to cling to God in spite of baffling providences, apparently unanswered prayer, distressing and incidents contrary to hopes. Faith is man's attitude toward God; grace is God's attitude toward man.

WE ARE POWERLESS.

And that not of ourselves: We are naturally conceited. We like to boast and take pride in our accomplishments. It is instinctive to place ourselves upon a pedestal and look with

disdain upon those at our feet. But in the redemption of the soul, personal pride cannot enter. We have no grounds for vanity. If it were not for God, we would still be a lost soul. In the natural world we finished our work at death; only the power of God can raise us into a state of life or change that which came from dust into a spiritualized immortal body. Lazarus could take no credit to himself for the added years of life which were given him when Christ said, "Lazarus, come forth." Our salvation and immortality are not of ourselves.

Lincoln's emancipation proclamation broke the shackles of the slaves. It was not the good conduct of the slave, nor any petition from the slave, nor anything which the slave had to offer which freed him. Lincoln, in the greatness of his love toward human beings like himself, put his signature to that paper which made the slave a free man. So apart from anything which we, slaves to our desires, have done, wish to do, or can do, Christ freely gives us freedom. Of ourselves we are utterly incapable. If God leaves us we are worse than hopeless and helpless—we are dead. God is all and man is nothing. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began (II Tim. 1:9)."

SALVATION IS GOD'S GIFT TO US.

It the gift of God: Salvation, like the world, came from God. In the beginning God created the world, in the beginning God made man, in the beginning God had gifts to be distributed to the sons of God.

Salvation is a gift of God. Some include faith as God's gift. We admit that never by any manifestation of good deeds, charitable bequests or noble purposes could we ever earn our salvation; no effort on our part would ever make us worthy; no lifetime, cheerful service would merit salvation. "For it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure (Phil. 2:13)."

But though it is a gift of God, we must do more than receive it. I have a student friend to whom has been given

a much longed for and prized library. He accepts the gift; the books are properly arranged and shelved; the gift, however, is not completely his until he digests book after book. Our faith in Christ brings us blessings but it requires a life of painstaking living to appropriate completely what God has placed at our disposal. "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake (Phil. 1:29)."

Our Christian life is nothing but a continuous record of receiving. God gives—man receives. If salvation does not come to us as a gift of God, it will never come. The history of the church is a record of God's blessings. Christ is continually seeking to give Himself to us as He did to the twelve and the first century church which so abounded in miracles.

Have we accepted Christ's deliverance? Do we understand the absolute futility of trying to save ourselves? Have we come to the Great Physician for spiritual advice and spiritual treatment? Christ alone can free us from the toils of sin. Our pride must not stand in the way of accepting this gift of God. We may want to earn our own way through life, may pride ourself upon never receiving any favors from the world, may glory in being self-made men and women, but we cannot be self-made Christians. We can only be redeemed by the blood of Christ. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin (I John 1:7)."

IX.

GOD ALONE BE PRAISED

"Not of works, lest any man should boast." —EPH. 2:9.

HIS WILL IS MY TASK.

Not of works: "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst received it? (I Cor. 4:7)." Mankind is always seeking credit. How we love to be praised. How eagerly we seek recognition. How much better we are than others give us credit for being. How apt all of us are to boast of our greatness, our religious convictions and feeling that after all, we are not so bad. If anyone had a right to feel that his life had really amounted to something, it was Paul. How many envy him his contributions to the religious life of his time. Every scar was a medal of honor conferred for valor in defending his Christ. And yet Paul knew that if he was to be saved it was not because of anything he had done. Salvation is a gift of God. It was because he was saved that he worked; he did not work to be saved. Heaven does not come to us as a reward for kind thoughts and charitable enterprises. Heaven cannot be made more secure by our good works or penances. Our salvation is not related to anything we do except accept, "Forsaking all I take Him." Our works merely prove we have experienced a change of heart, and evidence Christ's indwelling presence. Our works are a result, not a cause. Fruit is a proof of a good tree. We need good stock before we can pick good fruit. First have Christ in the heart, first be risen with Christ and good works will follow. Sin makes us all guilty before God. We can't balance our account until Christ pardons our sins and takes upon Himself punishment for our misdeeds. "Knowing that a man is not justified

by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified (Gal. 2:16)."

Man is dead in sin. What can a dead man do if he is to be made alive? A spark of life must be given to him from without. His reviving and resurrection is a gift of God. God gave us life to do good works but He does not give us salvation because of our good works.

Quite frequently you hear at funerals the comment, "Well, if any man is saved he is; he was such a good man." What a fallacy! Our goodness has nothing to do with our acceptance by Christ or salvation by Christ. "He that believeth on him is not condemned but is passed from death into life." "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:20)." "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God (Rom. 4:2)." "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began (II Tim. 1:9)." "And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work (Rom. 11:6)." "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by the faith of Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:16)." "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness (Rom. 4:5)."

ALL MEN SAVED BY GRACE.

Lest any man: This word of caution is much needed. How much harm can be done by a single man with the wrong viewpoint. A good apple in a basket of good apples can be good but it does not spread its goodness to the others. But when one apple is spoiled, how soon will neighboring apples in contact with it, spoil until the whole basket is ruined. One boasting Christian or self-glorying Christian

can contaminate an organization, a church or community. A room filled with pure air is a healthful place, but its purity does not spread itself. Let any foul thing get into that room and how quickly the atmosphere is made unlivable! That is why Paul in these three simple words cautions against allowing ourselves to become self-centered instead of Christ-centered, becoming vain like the Pharisees in pride of righteous service and self-esteem instead of exhibiting absolute humility of true discipleship and absorption in contemplating Divine redemption. Man is absolute debtor; he has nothing of which he can be proud. Pride is a sin, a gift of Satan and not of God. Man of himself is absolutely helpless, having no strength, nor capacity, nor ability to change his condition. Of what shall we boast?

GLORY IN GOD'S GIFT.

Should boast: Self-satisfaction is worse than quicksand. Only those who have been caught in its meshes can realize the utter futility of trying to fight against the silent, irresistible power of sinking sands. A person who is caught in the spirit of boastfulness finds the best elements of his nature are gradually submerged and the true life of the Christian is gradually extinguished. Boasting of religion is worse than boasting of some temporal accomplishment. There may be justification for a runner boasting of his speed, an accountant of his accuracy, a swimmer of his stamina, a musician of his technique, because hours of gruelling practice, constant self-denial, continuous struggle toward mastery, has developed championship ability. Belief in self is essential to mastery, but Christian character is an entirely different sphere. "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world (Gal. 6:14)." "For we are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3)." "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God (Rom. 4:2)." "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the

law of faith (Rom. 3:27).” “Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law and makest thy boast of God (Rom. 2:17).” “That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. That, according as it is written, he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord (I Cor. 1:29-31).”

These passages state all things are of God. He worketh all in all. A friend asked me the other day, “What do you have to do, to get faith in God?” He had tried to believe but failed. My answer was, “Do nothing; ask God for faith; exercise the same belief in God’s promises that you do when boarding a train, ship or plane.” Our part is to believe the promises and accept them on face value. A package comes through the mail addressed to me in the handwriting of my friend. I believe, having never been disappointed before, he has a gift inside the package; I accept it from the postman; this is not enough. My faith leads me to untie the knots, unfold the wrapping, open the box and see what his loving thought has suggested. Then the gift is mine. God has given us, through Christ, the gift of eternal salvation. It is ours as soon as we believe His promise and accept it. It is ours as long as we believe it. Let us joyfully receive the gift but not boast of our possession. Over-confidence precedes a fall. Many a struggle has been lost, many a soul has been doomed, many a life has been wrecked because of false confidence. How many fail to retain championship honors through over-confidence in their ability! “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 6:14).”

X.

WE ARE GOD'S WORKMANSHIP

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."
—EPH. 2:10.

This verse ends the paragraph giving us the method by which we are saved. It is one of the most practical verses in the letter. Some call it one of the great passages of Scripture, a verse which, if applied, will bring us assurance, peace, joy and rest.

WHY BE HUMBLE.

For we are: Prepositions cannot be ignored. We are apt to overlook small words, to judge certain thoughts unimportant because common or ordinary. Every small and unseen pin of a watch is vital to the maintenance and accurateness of that piece of delicate mechanism. This word "for" is like one of these little pins. This verse is held in place by this preposition. Its meaning depends upon it. We are not to boast because works follow and not precede our acceptance of Christ; we are His workmanship; we are born again to do the will of God. There is a Divine Architect to our character. We are saved by grace.

GOD'S WORKMANSHIP.

His workmanship: Every saved soul is a work of God. We are not self-made or self-created. In this modern, materialistic age we hear of self-made men and women who have risen from the crowd to a place of preeminent recognition by the sheer force of their ability, perseverance, hard work and self-denial, but no Christian can say that he is a self-made Christian—he is God-made. Everything he has comes from God. Romans (1:20) tells us a created world is the

handiwork of God, "The heavens declare the glory of God." God's creation has been called a poem. Its beauty has that exquisite characteristic which nothing less than a poem can fitly describe. The sky with its infinite space and its glittering worlds is a poem. The highlands in their setting of blue and green are poems. The precious stones which lie in soil and reflect every color of the rainbow are poems. And what of a sunset, the path of full moon on shimmering waters, the reflection of a rainbow? The flowers of mountains and valleys with their varied perfume and indescribable color are poems written by God. In the same sense the saved are a work of God. Anyone who has tried to be a Christian without having Christ within him knows how futile is the effort, how impossible to struggle against temptation, how useless to try to forgive those who are unjust. It is worse than trying to lift ourselves by our shoestraps. If we are God's workmanship, how much freedom have we given Him to work in us? Have you watched a sculptor work with marble? Every stroke removes chips to leave behind more of the desired vision, but how many strokes are necessary before you see the finished product. Day by day, God works with us, and through us, and leaves behind evidence of His workmanship. We are God's property in spite of the evil world which surrounds us and to which we give ourself. His hand is shaping us as the sculptor gives form to the mass of clay in his hands. The Lord Himself takes the reborn life and, by His Holy Spirit, makes something beautiful and creditable.

If we are God's workmanship, what is He making of us? An engineer creates an engine. Why? Certainly not that the blue prints be accurate, the casting perfect and the engine capable of profitable operation. The value of the engine is not in its cost of production but in its capacity for profitable labor. The inventor is honored in the work of a successful engine. Every electric bulb that scatters darkness brings honor to the workmanship of Thomas A. Edison. In like manner every Christian who becomes a channel of blessing, every unregenerate heart that receives the new gift of life, testifies to the handiwork of God. Every redeemed sinner is a living proof of God's power to save. Let us examine our

life and see whether we feel the pressure of God's hand, recognize His voice and exhibit to others a life of which they can say, "It is not us, but God that worketh in us."

THE DIVINE CREATION.

Created: The transformation from sin to sinlessness, from the old to the new man is so radical that it requires an act of creation. You can develop and improve plant or animal life, you can take a sick body and by proper medical and surgical care, create health but you cannot take a life of sin and by any gradual process get rid of sin. The old life has to pass away and a Divinely created spark has to enter. Christ said, "I am come that they might have life and might have it more abundantly." The foulness of a polluted spring needs to be removed if sparkling waters are to flow. The grace demanded of every follower of Christ necessitates new life. Christian personality is so fundamentally different from normal personality that it necessitates a work of God. "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:24)." "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (II Cor. 5:17)." "Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do (Gal. 2:10)."

A Divine creation includes a new heart, new life, new desire, new ambition, new view points, and new tasks. First we are good, then we do good. First the graft and then the luscious fruit. The first creation being marred by Satan and his angels, we need to be re-created again in Christ. It is not for us to question or reason or understand. It is for us to obey God. Some are puzzled and concerned as to whether God's method of creation gives us all the same characteristics. We are accustomed to machine production of nuts, bolts and divers articles of minute accuracy, every part to all intent being an exact duplicate of its predecessor. Is it so with the Christian? Does the gift of God's Spirit always react in the same way? Paul answers this question when he speaks of diversities of gifts. Edison was a prolific inventive genius.

He developed the phonograph recording the human voice and reproducing it as often as desired; he also developed the radio which reproduces the human voice, broadcasts it over the world but retains no permanent record. The radio and the phonograph both sufficient in themselves, differing in functions performed, both paid tribute to the genius of their inventor. In God's creation, in the hearts of believers, we find one has the ability to teach, another preaches, another sings. All serve Christ, doing their tasks beautifully, efficiently and to the praise of God. God works in them; His mark is on them. Is His trade-mark upon us? Are we new creatures in Him?

NEW LIFE REALIZED IN CHRIST.

In Christ Jesus: New life is realized in Christ. Ephesians has a refrain which repeats itself over and over again. "In Christ Jesus." The first verse speaks of the faithful "in Christ Jesus." "In Christ" we receive the inheritance. "In Christ" we receive redemption and forgiveness of our sins. "In Christ" we are built together for an habitation of God. "In Christ" all fulness of Divine gifts of spiritual blessings come to us. It is "in Christ" that we are complete. Three times in the immediate five verses Paul uses these words, "in Christ Jesus." It is Christ who gives us the gifts of God. It is only as we lose ourselves in His personality that we are what God would have us be, what Christ died to make us be and what we ourselves must be if the capacities within us are to be developed to praise Him.

THE PURPOSE OF CREATION.

Unto good works: God re-created us in order that we might do the will of God. "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness (I Thess. 4:7)." "Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (II Tim. 2:14, 15)." "For

brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another (Gal. 5:13)." "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2:14)." "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works (Eph. 2:10)."

The Christian life is never monotonous. We can never fold our hands and say our task is done. We go from assignment to assignment until death. Our work is like a tree. We may have dormant winter periods, but on the whole, like the tree which always reaches out a little further into the sky, digs a little deeper into the soil, rounds out its limbs and adds to its beauty, we grow from grace to grace developing characteristics of the Christian. We press on. Our work is not like the farmer who plows his field and comes to the last furrow, nor like the architect who places the final lines upon his plans. While there is life there is opportunity for expansion, perfecting, rounding-out and completing.

Being created for good works does not justify us in being proud of our good works. Good works are God's plan. Satan and his hosts are working tirelessly and God must work. The Lord works through His followers. If the light shines today, it must shine through the eyes of those who love Him, for if Christ is to be exalted it must be in the hearts of those who follow Him. Salvation is more than escape from hell and entrance into heaven. It is more than change of heart and right about face. It is more than studying to show ourselves approved unto God. It is more than praying unto the Father in the name of Christ. It is more than drawing away into the privacy of our closet and confessing our sins. It involves good works. Not merely work, indifferent and poor, but good work. A manual training teacher wants to see splendid work not chips and shavings. A successful pupil turns out materials unmarred by tools. The Master wants to find good work in His disciples, then more good work. Christ passing a barren fig tree caused it to wither and die. The only thing the matter with the fig tree was that it did not bear figs and a fig tree should bear figs. It isn't enough to have steam

rushing from a boiler. Steam is generated to be confined, controlled and diverted to turn the wheels of industry and produce marketable, profitable articles for commerce.

Many times we hear the noise of escaping steam and see the whirl of organized machinery in the church without finding that product of Christ-likeness, virtue, honesty, honor and service demanded by Christ. Here is a vessel sailing across the ocean. A spanking breeze is blowing; the sails are up, yet the boat is drifting. Men are needed to hold the ropes and set the sails. Jesus must hold me. God has given us His Bible. Christ has made His sacrifice, the Holy Spirit has come. Our hearts are made for a temple, but our will, our conscience and our hands must be held by Him.

A COMPLETE DESIGN.

Which God hath before ordained: This Epistle keeps bringing before our attention the fact that God knows what is going on in the world. He is not just doing the next thing, His plan is not like some houses requiring an added room or wing to make it home. Before the world was, before the sun and moon and stars gave their light, before man was made out of the dust of the earth, God had complete, detailed plans for the universe. He scheduled history and mapped duties for the saints. He knew then how frail and weak we were, susceptible to the wiles of the tempter. In spite of the antichrist who goes throughout the land crying, "Where is thy God?" because of evil, and the condemnation of sin, He has ordained Christian work should continue through pestilence, famine and fire. Obstacles are no excuse for failure to reach the goal. How comforting the thought—we are ordained from the foundation of the world. What kind of work are we doing? Are we living that "He might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory (Rom. 9:23)"? Are we living as though we are vessels prepared to receive glory?

THE PURPOSE OF SERVING.

That we should walk in them: "For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building (I Cor. 3:9)." "Now he that hath wrought for the self-

same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit (II Cor. 5:5)."

Though purity, honesty, forgiveness and long-suffering are to be daily graces and habitual acts, our place in the church, our task in the community is not to be statistical. We are to walk in Christ's way, demonstrate Christ's Sermon on the Mount, confess God before men, and tell others what He has done for us—thus perfecting our salvation. Only as we work continuously in good works, expressing our vitality in activity for the church, can we rise triumphant and be worthy of the sacred trust which has been placed in our hands. Only so can we maintain the tradition of our fathers and sing with earnestness, truth and power, "Faith of our fathers, living still."

Our walk is to be continuous and along His way. Our task is not an NRA project, to be intermittant and prolonged. Our task is to be done with all our might and main, we are to work as Paul worked, as Peter and John worked. Put earnestness, enthusiasm and power into your task. He has given you an assignment and with it strength to complete it. Let us work worthy of the vocation to which we are called.

Obstacles appear, problems lie ahead, but to him that overcometh, He will give more important duties. God never places us before a given task without leaving proper tools and directions. Moses was almost paralyzed when the stupendous task of leading the children of Israel out of the land of their taskmasters was given him, but God gave him helpers. God was near in emergencies and never failed to furnish adequate assistance. He will never leave us nor forsake us.

Are we fulfilling His Divine purpose? Have we yet received that Divine re-creation? Are we giving evidence by our works that we have been born again? First. Christ is for us, then Christ is in us and finally He works through us. Because Christ is in us we are not like those mechanical fountains sometimes seen in private homes that spray jets of water into the air as long as some hidden mechanism is wound but as soon as the spring is uncoiled, water comes to rest. We are living fountains of living waters whose supply never fails. Christ is our life—our all.

XI.

A NEW NATURE

"Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands."

—EPH. 2:11.

BE YE THEREFORE THANKFUL.

Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past: This verse assures Gentile Christians of fellowship with the Jews in the inheritance promised God's chosen people from the beginning of Hebrew history. This reminder is intended to deepen gratitude to God for His bountiful provision and strengthen faith. The believing Jew has nothing in Christ—the fulfilment of his long-cherished hope, that was not also a possession of all those outside the Hebrew nation who accept Christ as their Savior. But Paul wants Gentile converts to recall the time when they were outside the pale, when they were unregenerate, when the spirit of brotherhood did not exist, when the Jew was haughty in his pride of exclusive possession, and was intolerant toward those generically unrelated to him. The Gentile had inherited much from the Jew. We also are heirs of the ages. We are better Americans for our annual tribute to the faith of our pilgrim fathers and their Thanksgiving. The sacrifices of early New England and Virginian colonies have born fruit in establishing a land of liberty and equality for all future generations. The naturalized American citizen needs to look back to the old country and by contrast consider his present glorious heritage of freedom and opportunity. The believer must turn his eyes back to his previous condition in sin and thank God that through Christ, he is a member of this great household of faith.

The relationship of Jew and Gentile during Christ's ministry was similar to the fellowship between a lion and a lamb.

Acts 10 describes the feeling of absolute antipathy which existed not only between the non-Christian Jew and Gentile but also sometimes between the Christian Jew and the Christian Gentile. As Christ has been appropriated this hatred has been gradually overcome and scorn has been supplanted by love. In Christ, they say with all sincerity, "Blest be the tie that binds, our hearts in Christian love."

We dare not speak too hurriedly of living in a Christian world. Bitterness, superiority and oppression still exist not only between Moslem and infidel, between some Europeans and some Asiatics, between white and colored, between one religious sect and another, but also between some in every community. All these made in the same image of God, who accept God's identical plan of salvation, will be neighbors in heaven. All who have stopped living apart from God, who have renounced their servitude to Satan, who are freed from the condemnation of those who are out of Christ Jesus, all who have accepted the privilege of believers in the Divine Master, are obligated to dwell together in peace and harmony, to think of God's commission to send the light and give testimony of His power to save to the uttermost all who come unto the Father by Him. When we think of what God has done in us and for us and of what He can mean to anyone who believes in Him, we should devote all time to His praise and service. Let us inventory our former days—the absolute emptiness of life until we began to search the Scriptures and find in them the way of life, our weariness in shouldering life's burdens and responsibilities, then thank Him for the peace which comes from taking no thought for tomorrow, the sign posts of the Sermon on the Mount, and His abiding, comforting Presence.

PHYSICAL DESCENTS SECONDARY.

Gentiles in the flesh: The Jew used the word "Gentile" with absolute contempt and scorn. He included all those outside direct Jewish descent. You need to live in the Orient or at least have visited the Near East to know the depth of this scorn. Fortunately the western world has not imported this vice. The high cast Hindu still looks upon the European as

the Jew in the days of Paul considered the Gentile. Gandhi has been working among India's millions to overcome a vicious cast system which is perpetuating this spirit of superiority and inferiority, special privilege and absolute contempt. The Talmud describes the extent and depth of this feeling: "It is forbidden to give good advice to Gentiles"; again: "It is forbidden to excuse idolators even for pay; he that steals from a Gentile is only to pay the principal." How grateful we are that Christ abolished class distinction and religious privileges. The church has varying ceremonies adding dignity to the worship of God, but may the day soon come when difference of belief, manner of baptism, phrasing of our prayers and the method of our communion will no longer create separations. We are one in Christ.

The Jew considered not only the Ten Commandments and the law of the prophets, exclusively revealed to him as a nation, he also remembered a bodily mark of the covenant which he possessed as a seal of Israel's promised redemption. The Jew was ready to exclude all who did not enter into these covenant promises by this physical method. He did not comprehend the Spirit of Christ. The heart and the spirit of obedience far excels any minute observations of the letter. "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God (Rom. 2:28,29)." Christ must dominate our affections. Col. 2:11 points to the sin: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." It is sin that is to be removed—Christ who cleanses.

CONTEMPT REMOVED.

Who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands: "Ye know that ye were Gentiles carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led (I Cor. 12:2)." The Gentile with the Jew is not

responsible for any gain or loss because of his nationality. Christ came to abolish natural privileges. The church was to be the living body of a unified Christ. "Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular (I Cor. 12:27)." The twelfth chapter of First Corinthians outlines the great diversity in functions of the body and talents with which mankind has been endowed; but despite these differences, there is unity. There are many members but one body. The Ephesian church must therefore have this spirit within its organization. A better way is to be demonstrated. A new trail is to be blazed.

Prior to his conversion, Paul had used the same words that Jews were hurling as epithets at Gentile converts. He could understand how those who had recently accepted Christ as their Lord needed to beseech God to take from their minds this feeling of hostility and separation toward those who did not come by birth under the Abrahamic covenant. So Paul tells them no physical mark can ever separate us. The heart is the source and fountain of all spiritual power. We have no power without God. We cannot draw nigh to the throne of grace without Christ. Romans (chap. 2) describes God's judgment as universal. There is no respect of persons. God renders to every man according to his deeds. Sin alone separates from God, and denies us the glorious inheritance of sons of God. We properly speak of those outside the covenant, but can we justify by Scripture the intolerance with which Protestants and Catholics sometimes view each other? Is this spirit any whit better or different from the scorn of the Jew and Gentiles which Paul condemned?

Let us be absolutely certain we are members of more than a physical church and know, beyond doubt, our salvation is due to more than the physical rite of baptism, placing our name on a church roster, signing a pledge or partaking of communion. We must not minimize the spiritual values of these ordinances, but we dare not make them of such importance that the act of observing them is believed to save us. A change of heart and mind, complete surrender of self and spiritual rebirth, excel physical marks. God writes on face and character and conduct. God's Spirit produces a

change in the depths of our nature. Be sure our hearts and minds are touched by God before we count ourselves better than the Jew of yesterday. Regardless of our nationality and race, we are under bondage to sin and death, slaves of the present world, condemned in the world to come and without hope until we come to God, who is rich in mercy, for that experience which quickens us together with Christ, and causes us to rise and sit with Him in heavenly places.

XII.

LOST WITHOUT CHRIST

"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."

—EPH. 2:12.

A DARK PAST.

That at that time: What a dismal picture is presented in this verse. How glorious the following verses. First, without Christ, without God, aliens, hopeless and then, in Christ, brought near, welcomed into the family circle and living with God. In the twelfth verse, we have a ship at sea, storm-tossed, driven by winds and currents, having neither compass nor pilot. In the thirteenth verse we have Christ at the helm of our life, passing safely through perils to our eternal destiny. In the twelfth verse we are starving, emaciated citizens of a famished land and immediately through Christ we feed on the bread of life, have physical vigor, vitality and health. Without Him we are dead in trespasses and sin. Because of His grace, we can anticipate the time when we shall be with Him for ever.

CHRISTLESS.

Ye were without Christ: The Greek word properly translated means far more than being absent from Christ as one takes a visit away from his home. The Greek word suggests absolute separation, living apart from and far from Christ—positively no vital connection with Him who is our life. You do not cut a branch from a tree and expect it to live. Christ and the believer are to have that same interdependence which is seen in a tree and its root and branches. A tree need not always be in leaf, but the sap must flow continuously or there is death. Without Christ, life is hopeless; without Christ we

go back to the despairing situation of the heathen world with its superstition, despair, low valuation of womankind, cheapness of life, disease, poverty, lack of justice and no certain hope of immortality. Christ brought comfort in sorrow, forgiveness of sin, a sacrifice once and for all, sustaining guidance of His Holy Spirit, blessed assurance of salvation, calm repose at night, purpose in life, desire to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and hope of Divine sonship. The Jews anticipated the coming of the Son of David. Their individual and national hopes turned toward Him and were unsatisfied until He possessed Him, and yet, how unsatisfying was their synagogue worship in comparison with the simple devotion of a believer in Christ. When John the Baptist prepared the way for the coming of the Son of God he made a path in the wilderness for One who was to pilot us through all the storms of life; he heralded a Great Physician to prove adequate for all ailments of body, mind and soul, and introduced a Shepherd to satisfy those hungering and thirsting after a righteousness and goodness never realized apart from Him. Christ is the difference between being lost and saved. Without Christ is despair.

FOREIGNERS.

Being aliens: No one born in his native land and spending all his life there can understand the significance of living in a foreign land apart from home and estranged from everything for which his country and his people stand. How helpless and lost such a person feels at times. The heart constantly longs to some day walk upon home shores and live under the protection of the home flag and government. A person separated from Christ is such an alien. Those living in self-righteousness, indulgence, envy, jealousy, hatred, malice, and sin are aliens from God. Many an alien longing for the homeland is unable because of money, age, time and space to satisfy that longing to return. No such limitations keep us from Christ. "Come unto me all ye . . ." Religion is without money and without price. The arms of Christ are always extended. Those who know not God are aliens; the

Gentiles were aliēns. "Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods (Gal. 4:8)." Colossians bring aliēns the method by which they can return, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled. In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unprovable in his sight (1: 21, 22)."

WITHOUT CITIZENSHIP.

From the commonwealth of Israel: Citizenship was a privilege to be highly prized, to be purchased where not inherited. "And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born (Acts 22:28)." Our citizenship is in heaven. Birthright did not give every Jew inheritance in the Promised Land. All Jews escaping from Egypt did not enter the land overflowing with milk and honey. Sin excluded parents from the promised inheritance. "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel which are of Israel (Rom. 9:6)." Being an American citizen gives privileges recognized all over the world, but it does not render one immune to penalty for breaking law or keep one from prison bars. We are children of God and inherit, because of this, the image of God and all the privileges of Christian faith and belief, but we need to watch lest we become aliēns from our home in heavenly places. Separated from fellowship with Christ and Christians, absence from Bible study, neglect of the appointed services of the church and the sacred ordinances as they are established, mark the point of departure which leads further and further from the spirit of the church and vital contact with our Redeemer. It is more than backsliding, we are lost, miserable and at enmity with God. Romans (9:24, 25) calls us children of the living God. As such we become members of that kingdom which shall triumph over all kingdoms and rise victorious over the wrecks of time. My citizenship is in heaven.

OUTSIDERS.

And strangers from the covenant of promise: Old Testament books repeated covenants made with Abraham, Moses, Jacob and David pointing to Christ who should come and save them from their sins. Many were outside these promises and strangers to any privileges to be received from them. These covenants made to the Jews were to plant hope in their hearts, free them from sinful practices, discourage worship of various idols and cause them to practice wholehearted obedience as a price of their redemption. (Gal. 3:29). "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed (Gen. 12:3)." "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice (Gen. 22:18)." "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises (Rom. 9:4)."

Christ came to fulfill the law. He was the promised inheritance of Jew and Gentile. Through Him we have justification through faith and acceptance. Through Him the Jew is cleansed from hatred and scorn. All mankind is a family having been made one by the precious blood of the Lamb.

ETERNITY ASSURED.

Having no hope: The hope which is referred to here is the hope of life beyond this life. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable (I Cor. 15:19)." Ephesians did not all believe in immortality. Some of the philosophers, of which Aristotle was a type, did not believe in new life after death. Stoics contended that the soul was destroyed when all physical matter has burned. Plato and his followers went a step further and admitted that the soul passed through various changes of misery or happiness after death. Christ brought us hope of eternal glory. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope (I Thess. 4:13)." We do not sit in cold darkness with no warmth or fire. What intense and piercing

gloom surrounds those pessimists who believe that "the best thing was not to be born and the next best was to die." Remorse is natural to those whose hopes have collapsed. Life contains bitterness. Friendships sometimes prove disappointing. Desires frequently lead astray. Satisfaction of bodily cravings may lead downward. The world without God is wicked and those who follow its allurements, like inexperienced travelers in a parched desert, not only lose their bearings but also strength or desire to accept the assurance that God, in His great providence, holds treasure in heaven for us. The first chapter of Romans intimately describes those who fear to live up to God-given privileges.

We need to have not only the assurance of immortality but also the assurance of a gracious immortality. The soul can be immortal and yet spend an endless existence in hell. Paul anticipated an eternal reward received from God and enjoyed in His eternal presence which more than repaid the trials of earthly life. Sin dilutes earthly joy with sorrow, fear, unrest, disquiet and despair. Sin seems to possess unbreakable power. It blinds us to our hope in Christ, it deadens our heart to the Comforter; we live in darkness, worry, anxious care and the dull routine of daily toil. Sin deadens, darkens, disparages, disgusts. A person who treasures some habit or indulgence loses hope of an eternal reward and the wish to possess it.

While we feel hopeless and unworthy of hope, we are not hopeless to God. We must feel absolutely unworthy and unrighteous before Christ can help us. While there is life the penitent can accept the loving Savior—the only remedy for hopelessness. He alone can bring light into darkness, the beauty of holiness from ugliness, and redemption and freedom to the slave. Christ brought absolute assurance that all who believe in Him might find satisfaction for life's necessities. He cannot help those who wish to cling to their vices or cherish bitterness. Christ extends every hope to those who willingly accept the simple conditions imposed. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." No sinner can descend to hopeless depths unless the unpardonable

sin has been committed and few there are who commit it. Jesus saves. Blessed hope!

ATHEISTS.

And without God (the God): Some hold the opinion that all, somewhere down in their souls, have some faith in a God. Others trust our God but cannot believe He would punish with hell. A wide range of opinion is prevalent about God. Paul contends for a saving knowledge of God. Are you without God if believing in God? He does not do for you what He did for Paul. Paul believed in one Power which not only created the world but sustains it, one Supreme Being who was ruling mankind and one Power which saved the soul. Neither man nor creation can do without God. We do not live until He is ours. We are like man-made trees having the appearance of life, but dead.

Paul's age believed in visible gods. Idols were worshiped and sacrifices were made. We may place health, power, pleasure, independence, experience and wealth on pedestals and worship them as gods. There is only one true God and we cannot live without Him. In Him we must live and move and have our being. He created us, He furnishes us with the air we breathe, the sun whose vital rays protect us from diseases, the night which brings rest and sleep, and the Scriptural plan which saves us for all eternity. Sin separates us from our God. A wall is built between us. He is near but we do not see Him. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." We cannot walk with one foot in the kingdom of God and one in the kingdom of the world. We can be members of a church and be without God; we can render righteous service and be without God; we can have Bibles and be without God; we can even pray and yet not have God in our hearts. The supreme, eternal, unchangeable, immovable Ruler of all the universe has offered us the way to possess Him. "Seek and ye shall find." "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." God did not breathe into man the breath of life, furnish him with everything conducive to a healthful, satisfying use of this vitality and then forsake him as a finished product. God did not create this universe, elaborately furnish it, then

leave it to the passing whim of unguided man. God desires to have a place in the heart of man. Yet strange as it may seem, we can revel in the universe He has planned, have nothing but admiration and affection for Him, we can obey Him, be chastised by Him, sacrifice for Him, serve Him and yet not be saved. God is as indispensable as our breath, the air, and the beating of our heart. He must be vitally near to us. When we feel most miserable, when all seems lost, when life appears empty, when the world offers nothing but snare and disillusion, our God inspires us with new hopes and ambitions, and proves to be Friend of friends. If we are faithful to the end, we shall receive our reward and a crown of righteousness that fadeth not away, which is kept for all those who love His Son. "Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God (I Thess. 4:5)." "Howbeit then, when ye know not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods (Gal. 4:8)." "Ye should turn from those vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein (Acts 14:15)."

When we feel absolutely alone, God is closest to us, waiting to give us of Himself and assure us beyond any reasonable question of doubt that all His resources are ours. All He ever gave Christ or the apostles of the early church will be given us if we accept and receive Him. Have we ever made God ours, or are we without Him?

THE BATTLE GROUND.

In the world: If there is any place which needs to have Christ, it is a world in which Satan and his angels are walking to and fro, among fallen humanity, ceaselessly striving, struggling and crying out. Into this world God sent His only begotten Son to die that man might live. This Savior waits to live in our hearts. We can feel the thrill of His companionship, and the pride of being associated with Him in the redemption of mankind.

He comes into my world to take me from this present evil world. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have

chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you (John 15:19)." Speaking of His disciples, Christ said, "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world (John 17:14)." Paul meditates upon Christ "who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father (Gal. 1:4)."

If we glance at ourselves, it is very easy to see whether or not we fall into the classification of the Gentiles at Ephesus who were hopeless, without Christ, and without God. Are we interested in the things with which Christ constantly busied Himself during the three years of His ministry? Have we any concern over the lost souls around us? Are we without hope? With what calmness can we view our own death? Is there any fear or uncertainty as to what lies beyond? Or are we assured that there is a place prepared for us in a heavenly home? Are we without God? Do we live as though there never had been a God and were no God who sees all, knows all, and causes all to give an account? Do we recognize the first of the Ten Commandments? Are we ready to give Him a tithe of our income? Do we feel impelled to worship Him, and live in harmony with His purposes and will?

XIII.

ACCESS TO GOD

"But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." —EPH. 2:13.

THE GLORY OF TODAY

But now: Having painted in the preceding verse a dark picture of the Gentiles before accepting Christ, this verse describes in sharp contrast the benefits received from the new-found faith. Words contrasted are "without Christ" and "in Christ," what they "were" and what they "are," "far off" and "made nigh."

They were previously dead in trespass and sin, they walked according to the prince of the power of the air, they had their conversation in fleshly desires, they were children of wrath and disobedience. But God who is rich in mercy, hath received them and made them sit in heavenly places in Christ. Paul is very clear in attributing this transformation to the Divine love of God. It is a gift of grace and not a reward for good works.

The Jews, conscious of their Old Testament heritage and privilege had previously looked down upon all those outside of blood connection with them as being outside the covenant promises. None but Jews could inherit the blessings which attended their sacrifices and ceremonies. Their prejudice and hatred against all others was deep seated, but the founding of the early church abolished these distinctions and purposed to remove this antipathy. A great brotherhood was formed including Gentiles. This change in attitude called for tolerance and humility. The Gentile Christian needed to beware lest he become as intolerant toward the Jew as the Jew had been intolerant toward him. This caution is not out of place today. Each one of us can profitably look back upon our

mental, physical and spiritual state before rebirth in order to properly use the blessings which have attended our yielding to the will of Christ and God. Praise and testimony rise with the refrain "once I was blind but now I can see, the Light of the world is Jesus." Frequently believers feel incapable of making public testimony of their faith. To such the suggestion is given—look back at the life without Christ and then stand on your feet and begin "but now . . ."

VITAL UNION WITH CHRIST.

In Christ Jesus: The words "in Christ Jesus" appear and reappear throughout this epistle. The inclusion of Jesus emphasizes the significance of His name, "thou shalt call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins." It is not enough to recognize Christ as being the source of our blessings; there must be a living union with the Messiah and an individual appropriation of the reconciling work of Christ. All of our hope comes from faith in Christ. We are not merely citizens of a heavenly country, inheriting the privileges of heavenly citizenship, we are also sons of God. Jesus is on intimate terms with each one who accepts Him as Redeemer. He becomes the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth.

PAUL VS. THE PRESENT.

Ye who sometimes: Hebrews gives us a magnificent glimpse of the Hebrew Hall of Fame. The eleventh chapter graphically enumerates great heroes of faith. Rahab is mentioned among the last. Her past life was spotted but her faith saved her and her family. God accepted her trust even though it had its beginning in fear, and rewarded her by personal safety, later marriage to a Jewish prince and direct relationship to David and Christ. After the fall of Jericho and the destruction of all its inhabitants, Rahab, at peace in the camp of Israel, must have frequently sung praises to God as she thought of her former life and her present peace and security. Paul would have every Christian turn the pages of his memory and look back, not as Lot's wife to regret the life she left,

but to see by contrast the new life and its benefits—the fruits of righteousness instead of the fruits of sin, the rewards of God's mercy instead of the punishments of sin. There was a time when the Gentile was entirely removed from any benefit from blessings accorded to trusting Jews. So few of the Jews recognize Christ as the long sought Messiah. Gentiles were receiving blessings neglected by the Jews. These benefits, however, were due to no merit in themselves but to the working out of God's great providential plan. Once they were aliens and strangers, without hope, without Christ, and without God. But now, they are of the household of faith and fellow citizens with the saints.

SEPARATED FROM GOD.

Far off: The word "far off" was commonly used to describe the condition of all those outside the covenant promises of Israel. The Gentiles were therefore far from God, far from favor and fellowship with God. "Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people from far (Isa. 49:1)." "Peace, peace to him that is far off (Isa. 57:19)." "For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are far off (Acts 2:39)."

Here, the word "far off" meant not only distinction from and separation from the citizenship of Israel, it also meant banishment from the privileges of grace and exclusion from the benefits of true believers. It was customary for Jewish rabbis to refer to worshipers as "being near" or "far" from the covenant promises. Various temple areas were separated by a stone wall beyond which no Gentile could pass upon penalty of death. Tablets inscribed in Greek and Hebrew were placed at intervals along this wall warning those who passed to expect the death penalty. Even citizens of Rome were not exempt from this severe penalty. They were far off.

Paul thinking first of the Gentiles included also among those that were far off, all who were morally separated from God through unbelief, treasuring of some known sin, a life out of harmony with the teachings of Christ or removal from that holiness which He demanded. These were liable to the

just displeasure of God for moral delinquencies. All who are unregenerate or far off from Christ must bring their life into harmony with His, accept Him as their personal Savior and forsake all to follow Him. This applied to Jew and Gentile. The Jew had been far off for a longer period; special privileges had been given him; he had been rescued from the tyranny of Egypt; God led him through forty years wandering in the wilderness and delivered him from enemies. The Jews forgot God and became an idolatrous people, having the outward semblance of worship but inwardly having murder, selfishness and defiance of the spirit and letter of the commandments which had been given them. Christ came to draw near the unfearful Jew and the unbelieving Gentile—both were far off. As the brazen serpent was lifted up in the wilderness to heal all who looked, so the Cross of Christ was raised and the exalted Lord was lifted into heavenly places to draw with magnetic love, sacrifice and promised cleansing those whose sins were many.

THE REDEEMED ARE NEAR TO THE HEART OF GOD.

Are made nigh: These words describe contact but also a vital union as by fusion or graft. A bud is grafted into a branch. As the wound is healed and the sap begins to flow into the bud, the life of the bud and the foster plant become one. So the believer becomes united to his Lord; so the Gentile inherits the privileges of the house of Israel; so the new covenant distributes its privileges to all who are justified by faith and become adopted sons; so those sanctified by His Spirit are eventually glorified with Christ.

This promise of nearness fulfills the promise made in Acts: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call (2:39)." No longer were inner and outer courts to be in the Temple, no longer could death penalties be inflicted for trespassing on holy ground. Sin alone deserved punishment. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Every soul that draws nigh to God will be rewarded by having God draw nigh. Sin alone could separate man from his Creator. Every anxious soul could approach the mercy seat

with confidence. Christ demonstrated the truth of this time and again when He received anxious seekers the disciples had turned away from the tired Lord. Jesus was always ready to reward eager faith. The Gentile brought nigh to the throne of grace was a type of any believer who desired to find God. "Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." This glorious hope and promise has inspired missionaries of all ages with zeal to carry the good news of nearness to foul and degraded heathen. Those dead in trespass and sin cleansed by Jesus, become eager to acknowledge Him and trembling alive to follow His commandments to preach the gospel to every creature. Those who have lived in a spirit of absolute rebellion against the ordinances of the church and the teachings of the gospel, become willing to surrender the pleasures of a moment for the hope of eternity with God; those who have been slaves to themselves and powerless to resist the temptations of their friends are now cleansed by the blood of Christ and enabled to triumph over besetting sins and stand firm on the new-found faith.

The Cross of Christ is the symbol of this power. Because of the Cross we find a growing Christ-consciousness and a decreasing class-consciousness. As we look at the sacrifice on Calvary, we care less about distinctions, forms, phrasings of creeds and differing ceremonies which produce denominational clashes and tend to religious exclusiveness. As we draw nigh to Christ we are brought near each other. God's Spirit imparts that wisdom, communicates that love for all and produces that gentility of life that causes Christians to forget that they are Jew or Gentile, Eastern or Western, heathen or Christian. As we bow at the feet of Jesus, one thought is uppermost—what must I do to be saved?

POWER AND THE BLOOD.

By the blood of Christ: Some texts give the preposition "in" instead of "by." As Aaron fulfilling his priestly functions, brought the children of Israel nigh by the blood of the sin offering, so all men are brought nigh to each other and nigh unto God by the atoning blood of Christ. His sacrifice has

been responsible for the enlargement and enrichment of the human family. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:28)." "Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission (Heb. 9:20-22)."

Blood is always used as a type of acceptable approach. Recall blood on the doorpost saved the children of Israel from the calamity which befell their Egyptian neighbors. The blood of Christ separated Jew and Gentile from the inevitable punishment of their sins and gave them the promise of the new covenant. When instituting the Lord's Supper, Christ identified His blood with this new covenant: "For this is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins (Matt 26:28)." It was the infinite love of a perfect sacrifice which was to draw both Gentile and Jew, Roman and Greek, to Himself. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me (John 12:32)."

Among those faces gathered at the crucifixion and gazing at the Cross, you would find a cross section of the world today;—scorning, laughing, indifferent, undecided, yearning, adoring, yielding, pleading faces. What is written on *your* face?

Modern churches have been criticised for placing too little emphasis upon the blood of Christ and its cleansing power. The blood of Christ is rarely referred to as that which alone can remove sin, the hatred of class for class, and local prejudices. We are more anxious to draw a crowd than to tell the truth. "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him (Rom. 5:9)." "We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:14)." "Having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself (Col. 1:20)."

How perfectly these verses summarize the efficacy of Christ's blood. What does the blood of Christ mean to you?

to your spirit? Has it made His life your life? Does it give willingness to sacrifice and destroy feelings of enmity against those who have injured us and been unfair to us?

The blood of Jesus brings us into a great interlocking fellowship of believers. An ancient Jewish ceremony of cleansing involved the sprinkling of blood upon those who gathered before the priest. The blood of Christ is not only sprinkled upon us but flows in our veins. This warfare within us is made more certain of victory for righteousness because of this power within us. When we have triumphed over our baser self, we sing, "All hail the power of Jesus' Name"; "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin." There is power in the blood "drawn from Emmanuel's veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains."

XIV.

TRUE BROTHERHOOD

"For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us."

—EPH. 2:14.

CHRIST OUR PEACE OFFERING.

For he is our peace: Among various offerings which Jews were required to present was the peace offering. This offering must have no blemish. Christ is the spotless Peace Offering of all mankind. He alone is sinless. No one else had the qualities satisfying all requirements of the Old Testament peace offering. "And if his oblation be a sacrifice of peace offering, if he offer it of the herd; whether it be male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the Lord. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about. And he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace offering, an offering made by fire unto the Lord; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards (Lev. 1:1-3)." While the Jew constantly sacrificed to retain God's favor, Christ made one sacrifice sufficient for all times and all men unto the end of the world.

Another difference is to be noted. Only Jews could offer the peace offering. Christ admitted the despised Gentile to the privilege of redemption. Jesus was Savior of the world.

Christ's sacrifice causes man to be at peace with God and himself; it should also produce peace among men. Peace is to be shared. God's gifts are lost when selfishly kept. The peace of Christ comes to some like the calm after the smoke of battle has lifted. Christ gives rest from contention, inward struggles and disturbed consciences.

To others the peace of God is like the quiet of a protecting

mountain. It is that easy, gentle, understanding fellowship of unity and perfect love. God's love in our hearts shields us from many storms and violent scenes. Jews could never know this peace until Christ was accepted as the long sought Messiah and they had overcome their feeling of antipathy for the despised Gentile. The same was true also of Gentile hostility against the Jews. Both were unwilling to have more than business or political relations—social and religious intercourse was tabooed. As they gathered around the common communion table and partook of the Lord's Supper, all were to be one in spirit, thinking of the broken body and shed blood of Jesus.

The ceremony, celebrated in peace, gave peace. "And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly (John 13:27)." "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you . . . Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me even so I send you . . . And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them; then came Jesus, the doors being shut and stood in the midst and said, Peace be unto you (John 20:19, 21, 26)." Christ's birth brought a new reign of peace. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men (Luke 2:14)." Christ's death gave peace. "And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself, by him I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven (Col. 1:20)." Peace is an outstanding characteristic of good. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Thess. 5:23)." Christ is a personification of peace. "Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all (II Thess. 3:16)." All hunger for peace. "And this man shall be the peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land; and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and

eight principal men (Micah 5:5).” No peace can compare with His. “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6).” Our peace was purchased by His death. “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed (Isa. 53:5).” We should be messengers of peace. “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet, of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth (Isa. 52:7).” All who call upon God may have peace. “I create the fruit of the lips, Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near saith the Lord; and I will heal him (Isa. 57:19).”

THE CROSS LEVELS.

Who hath made both one: The first tendency of the church at Ephesus, in common with the spirit of the times, was to divide Christians into Jews and Gentiles. They had little in common and much to separate them. Paul insisted Christ would have them brought together in common purpose. They worshiped side by side. They shared conferences to arrive at a better understanding of the teachings of Christ. Gradually they progressed so far in their homogeneous character and had such perfect understanding and sympathy with each other that an outsider could look at them and say they were one in purpose, they were Christians. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26).” The word “Christian” was bigger than Christian Jew or Christian Gentile. The prayer of Christ that “they all might be one, even as I and the Father are one” was being constantly answered in the development of the early Christian church.

The task of unity is never easy. It is always difficult to reconcile differences, overlook prejudices, forgive to the uttermost and sit in common council, but nothing less than this

will satisfy the desires of Christ for the Christians. The sacrifice on the Cross purposed the leveling of all humanity. We all approach the Cross as sinners in need of pardon and grace. Our common need of Him is to bring unity among ourselves.

CHRIST UNITES.

And hath broken down: Christ does away with that which has a tendency to separate. Man has never reached that Utopian state where he recognizes no distinctions between himself and those more or less fortunate. The struggle for honor, fame and supremacy, the organization of society, business, politics and even the church, the creation of executive boards and lay workers, places differences of authority, responsibility, and ability which become barriers. Only in the church are these walls to be removed. The Mohammedan has elevations for worshipers in his mosque. The Christian's common need of Christ makes these distinctions inconsistent. He cannot speak on Sunday and pass on Monday. We become so absorbed in the task of being in harmony with His nature and changing our unrighteousness for His righteousness that it is impossible for us to think of our neighbor with hatred. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth (Rom. 10:4)." "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us (I John 1:3-8)."

The East seems to have many more barriers than the West. National pride, low opinion of womanhood, superior station in life, imagined superiority of race and differences of cast say "This far shall thou come and no farther." Men and

women, bond and free, social outcasts, untouchables, wearing apparel, social and religious arrogance and exclusiveness, weave these walls. Fear, hatred, jealousy, unneighborliness, loathing of fellows, keep these walls intact. Christ levels. The Cross breaks down distinctions between saint and sinner, sect and station. Christ would have us follow the example of that humble servant who cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner" and having received pardon, seek another to bring to the mercy seat. Let us break down these walls which separate.

PETITIONS REMOVED.

The middle wall of partition: Paul was thinking primarily of Jews and Gentiles. He could not bear to go into a synagogue and see people worshiping God as though Christ had never been born. He had seen the true Spirit of Christ, had experienced happiness in his new faith, and knew that Jews and Gentiles were spiritually emaciated. Only by giving themselves whole-heartedly to the teachings of Christ could social, moral and religious walls be removed. In the temple area, a stone wall three cubits high, separated Jewish worshipers from the curious Gentile. But prejudice was stronger than any wall of stone. Unfortunately the privilege which God had given the children of Israel added strength to Jewish exclusiveness. "And Haman said unto King Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws diverse from all people, neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them (Esth. 3:8)." "And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean (Acts 10:28)." Christ breaks down this wall. Birth, the advantage of education, the power of wealth can no longer buy religious immunity, indulgence or privilege. We stand on a common level before God. Difficulties of church co-operation and bitterness between religious leaders lead us to wonder whether man is not trying to rebuild the walls which Christ tore down.

BARRIERS ARE DESTROYED.

Between us: Paul was a brilliant orator. He knew how to drive home a point. His readers' and hearers' hearts were stirred by his essays. Their guilt could not escape his finger. So he writes—the world through Christ is to be a brotherhood. These ideal conditions did not and do not exist. This lack of harmony can be traced to their own thoughts, actions and lives. It is possible to be selfish in the enjoyment of Christian privileges and wish to exclude from the church or our pew those who have fallen in sin. Christ never turned away any seeking light. Paul followed Christ's example. "And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him, Crying out, Men of Israel, help; this is the man, that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place; and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place. (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus, an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.) And all the city was moved, and the people ran together; and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple; and forthwith the doors were shut (Acts 21:27-30)." What a pitiable scene. The presence of Trophimus, an Ephesian, accompanying Paul into the temple caused dispute. Who has not heard discussions center about the conduct of members, officers and even pastors of churches and the statement, "They are unworthy to be members of the church"? Paul neither excuses nor denies facts. Sorrow is expressed for their existence. He points to God. "He that is without sin let him cast the first stone." Why should man exclude whom God admits? Pray for the Spirit of God to see in our fellow-men what He sees. May nothing ever separate us from each other, lest it also separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

XV.

PERFECT RECONCILIATION

"Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace." —EPH. 2:15.

TRIUMPH IN DEATH.

Having abolished: The word "abolished" is very significant. An obstacle is not only removed but destroyed; a debt is paid in full; an enmity is annihilated; a wall is torn down beyond hope of rebuilding; a weed is uprooted and destroyed with fire. The Spirit of Christ cannot tolerate hatred between men. His sacrificial death on the Cross annuls old law. Those who believe in Him may be accepted as sons and heirs. Christ has fulfilled once and for all the requirement of the old law.

CHRIST'S BODY SUFFERED.

In his flesh: Christ might have ascended into heaven without dying on the Cross and given us an assurance of forgiveness, but such a promise even from the lips of the Son of God would not convince everyone nor have the weight of words proceeding from one voluntarily assuming the guilt of our sins. The Jews used blood in rites of atonement. Nothing less than the blood of Christ could satisfy them and meet all requirements. No pin prick or surface wound, even though it came from a crown of thorns was sufficient. Life blood was needed. The triumph of the Cross was due only to the suffering and death which had been vanquished. Christ by His death paved the way for abolishing the hatred between Jews and Gentiles and reconciled man and God. As His Spirit entered the hearts of believers they became true brothers. As they put off the old man and put on the new man they became reconciled to each other and to their heavenly Father. Christ died and lived again. We need to die to our old selves

before we can live in Christ. "And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind . . . now hath he reconciled, In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in his sight (Col. 1:21,22)."

HOSTILITY ABOLISHED.

The enmity: This is personal hatred, not nationalism. The spirit of a nation, being the combined spirit of its people, may have the characteristics of enmity, particularly during time of war. God's chosen people were commanded to hold themselves aloof from the world, meaning the Gentile world. They were not to hate them. First century Christians were commanded to keep themselves from the present evil world. The question is purely moral, related to the worship of one true God. Religious emotions are not to be dispelled or wasted upon strange gods. The Jews had departed from the original intent of these prohibitions and demonstrated hatred and bigotry toward Gentiles, while they were on friendly terms with sin. Emphasis had been misplaced. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be (Rom. 8:1-7)." Christ wanted His followers to lose themselves in Him and so be lost to the world. Enmity to each other and condemnation before God are both destroyed in Christ. Christ must be all or nothing if personal enmities are to be obliterated and man's quarrel with God is to be settled.

The Jew was unimportant politically. His great contribu-

tion was religious. Through the Jews came the Messiah and the Scriptures. The Jews should have been looking intently for the Messiah; instead, social and physical environment took precedence of the religious. No wonder the Jews did not recognize Jesus as the prophesied Messiah. Come close to the heart of God to find peace within, peace with others and peace with God. Those who do not know Him as a personal Savior find themselves constantly assailed by doubt, involved in quarrels with others and besieged with mental differences driving them from worship of God. Christ alone can clear away the enmity of the world.

LAWS ARE REPEALED.

Even the law of commandments: Without law there is no sin. "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound, but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound (Rom. 5:20)." Sin deceives. "And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me (Rom. 7:10,11)." Righteousness is from Christ. "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit (Rom. 8:4)." The Ten Commandments and Old Testament ordinances separated the Jew from the rest of the world. The sternness of these prohibitions were resented by the Jew who frequently affiliated himself with other nations and suffered punishment in consequence. While punishment was severe, rewards more than compensated for obedience. Blessings extended in this life, the future life and were passed down to future generations. Blessings as well as sin can be passed from generation to generation. Because many of our local and national laws are poorly enforced, many go on the assumption that the eyes of God are also closed and disregard His laws. "The mill of the gods grind slowly and exceeding fine." The day of judgment never fails. "Be sure your sin will find you out."

Righteousness is difficult to obtain by trying to live up to the Commandments. The Jews almost failed. "Thou shalt not" stirs resentment. "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith (Gal.

3:24).” So Christ gave a new law of love that we should be no longer under a schoolmaster. “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil (Matt. 5:17).” “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets (Matt. 7:12).” This law if followed and applied by all would fulfill all the law, bring a new spirit of happiness and obedience. The whole world can use Christ’s law of love. It is not restricted to the Jewish race. As the children of Israel suffered punishment in the forty years wanderings in the wilderness so we will suffer for disobedience. Because of the frailty of our wills and the power and seduction of temptation we need to plead for help, mercy and forgiveness from Him who shouldered the world’s sin. Christ is the basis of our acceptance. Those who have the laws are not accepted for keeping them; those who have them are no longer debarred through not keeping them.

POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE.

Contained in ordinances: “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross (Col. 2:14).” The law had certain requirements which our frail natures made it impossible to fulfill. So Christ comes and takes upon Himself our condemnation in the sight of ordinance and says, “Go, sin no more.” The old law was negative—“Thou shalt not”; the new law is positive—“Touch not, taste not, handle not.” How much easier it is to do something than it is to keep from doing something. Forbidden fruit always seems sweetest. Christians go positively about their task, keeping friends and changing them. Christ’s work cannot be done by convent life. They shine as lights upon a hill. Others must know Jesus lives in us. The army, navy and marines are distinguished by their uniforms; so the church of Christians and the followers of Christ are known by their Christlike character.

A PERFECT GRAFT.

For to make in himself of twain: "For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers: all things were created by him and for him (Col. 1:16)." The word "make" might better be translated "create" because the new spirit which abolishes the hatred of the Jew and the Gentile must be created. Christ turned to Nicodemus and said, "Ye must be born again." Only a new birth can give this spirit. History has clearly proved the accuracy of this statement. Dictators rise and by personality, will and armed force, organize and compel obedience. How soon they fall! Obedience and loyalty are from the heart. The sun compels the seed to burst and reach through the soil, so Christ draws us toward Him and our better selves. When Christ lives within us we are able, through Him, to forget differences, efface distinctions, merge varying views and submerge personal opinions. This Spirit of Christ within us causes us to be indifferent to our race. We are able to break old habits, to acquire new tastes, to live for Him. It is impossible to have all races dwell together in peace and harmony apart from Christ. The Golden Rule will help, but it does not go far enough. Only the indwelling Christ causes us to wish to apply the Golden Rule. Through Christ there will be neither Jew nor Greek, nor Scythian, nor Barbarian. God created all men. If He sees a purpose in them so must we. They as we are for Him. Let us work together for Him.

Science and commerce have done a great deal to bind the world together. The locomotive, modern roads, the airplane, telegraph, cable, telephone, wireless and radio have contributed to a better understanding between people in the world. But all these have failed to prevent war or remove those quarrels which cause war. Travel, intermarriage and economic interdependence have brought the world closer. Greed, oppression, opiates, liquor, unjust and selfish men have frequently unravelled what commerce has knit, but God's way is the only way. His solution is simple, direct, old-fashioned and permanent. "Ye must be born again." The

union of Jew and Gentile symbolizes the brotherly union of all creeds, colors and nationalities in Christ.

THE CHRIST REBORN.

One new man: This is neither a Gentile Jew or a Jewish Gentile, but a Christian. Not outward symbol or ceremony is adequate in itself. A changed heart, absolutely pure in character, indicates the new man. The old things have passed away. Christ makes His home in our hearts. We are new men because He is there. When a Christian is dissected or put through the acid test Christ is always found. If one asks, "Where can I learn of Christ," point to the Bible and a true Christian. The new man may be one or many—the spirit is the same. Paul frequently writes of the living body of Christ. As there is only one Christ, the church must demonstrate the one spirit characteristic of Him (I Cor. Ch. 12).

"Neither do men put new wine into old bottles else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish; but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved (Matt. 9:17)." "Put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:24)." God's solution for sin is not patching up, special activity, special training, psychological analysis or education, but a new nature that is capable of keeping the new man in the way, the truth and the life; that can make a new start and keep on the path; that can accept Christ for a pattern of life and follow the pattern without modifications or changes or additions. The new man day by day desires to partake of His life, nature and mind and become harmonized to His will. This new man is the Spirit of Christ in the church. Wherever you find a Christian you find Christ. "The old race had Adam as its head; the new race has Christ as its Head."

ENDURING PEACE.

So making peace: How wonderful that God can bring between conflicting races and between God and man. This peace passes all understanding. It is unobtainable by human means;

the Hague cannot secure it; the League of Nations cannot legislate it. He makes Peace because He is the Prince of Peace. He is our Peace. The Cross is the means of securing it. He has abolished all that would destroy peace and unified those who previously were at enmity. Peace movements fail unless they consider Christ as the Giver of peace. The best way to reduce armament is to increase the power of evangelism. Envoys of Christ can accomplish more than diplomats. Men are human, Christ is Divine. He can have His way with me.

Christ performs the miracle of binding diverse personalities together into a harmonious working whole. Notice the fellowship of World Sunday School or Christian Endeavor conventions. All in their common desire to testify of Him have peace with each other.

XVI.

RECONCILED TO GOD

"And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." —EPH. 2:16.

CHRIST'S WORK FOR US.

And that he might reconcile: One effect of Christ's influence was the development of a spirit of brotherhood among all men. This condition had never existed previously. Temple worship had stimulated it but the law could not eliminate enmities and hatreds. Christ made all things new. A new creation was needed in the heart of all believers. Nothing short of that could produce true brotherhood and permanent peace. Nations have been unable to legislate reconciliation. Religion apart from Christianity has failed to bring peace among men. Nominal Christianity has fared no better. Only a complete change of thought and motive, such as the indwelling of Christ occasions, has attained this.

Paul puts his finger on the remedy when he points to the reconciling work of Christ. Sin separates man from God and man from man. Satan declares open warfare against the interests of the kingdom of God. When Satan enters the hearts of men, he drives away an otherwise natural desire to obey God. To reunite men, to clear away this barrier of sinful nature and act, reconciliation is needed. Christ is an ideal intermediary. This bringing together of man and his Master, this reinstatement in the favor of God, this complete restoration of broken friendship could take place only as Christ had shed His blood on the Cross and borne the sins of man upon His body. Christ's reconciliation justified the sinner in the eyes of God and perfected the work of atonement once and for all so that no further life and blood sacrifice would ever be required. The word "reconciliation"

suggests great distance. A gulf, previously unbridged, is made passable. This work of reconciliation brings together those that were going further and further away from each other and makes a safe and easy passage to the other side. All previous enmity is completely removed. Opposing parties have an absolute and perfect understanding of each other and travel a future common road with friendliness. Old Testament prophets were continually crying, "Be ye reconciled to God." They understood the gulf between God and the world. On all sides there was evidence of hatred. Life was cheap and marred by the failures of leaders. God was continually dealing with rebellious people.

It was not until the Cross was raised on Calvary that people understood what was required of them and had the power of fulfilling His hope. After Golgotha man could be at peace with God. Jesus has reconciled us to God. "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled (Col. 1:20, 21)." Christ's death is the price. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life (Rom. 5:10)." God planned that Jesus should be the agent of reconciliation. "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God (II Cor. 5:18-20)." "And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory (Rom. 9:23)."

A HAPPY CHRISTIAN FAMILY.

Both unto God: This chapter was originally intended for members of the early Ephesian church, composed of Jews

and Gentiles. The message addresses itself today to believers and unbelievers; to those understanding Christ's message who earnestly strive to live sincerely and wholeheartedly, and to those skeptics active in opposing that for which the church stands and for which it was founded. All conflicting elements of society however far apart they may appear to be are to be unified in Christ. He is the only common platform upon which all men can meet. In Him is unhindered fellowship. Jew and Gentile agree on the sufficiency of Christ to save them, to reconcile both to God and to enable them to carry this spirit of unity in their daily intercourse. Religion is not religion until it permeates seven days in the week. As the same air fills church, home, school, farm, office and factory, so the Spirit of Christ must be found everywhere. Christ overturned the tables of money-changers in the temple area who undoubtedly fulfilled the law within the temple enclosure. We must be as reconciled to our fellowmen as we are to God. We cannot be complete, reconciled to God if we are at enmity with our neighbor or enemy. Christ told a man to leave his gift at the altar and be reconciled to his brother before making his gift. How happy we should be over our complete reconciliation with God.

THE WORK OF JESUS ON THE CROSS.

In one body by the cross: Jesus performed a distinct mission when He was born of the virgin Mary. He gave to motherhood a new honor and to parenthood a new goal. His declaration completely altered current ideas of religion. His teachings revolutionized the family and the attitude of private citizens to their government. "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's." He reinterpreted God as a personal loving Father. His real message was given from the Cross. Then He could say: "It is finished." The Cross was the instrument of reconciliation. He made us one with Him. Many who turned away sorrowfully after listening to the parables of Christ, undoubtedly stood before the Cross and made the decision to follow Him at all costs. The scenes of Calvary opened their eyes; their understanding was no longer darkened. The attitude of Christ

toward His enemies, His words to the dying thief, His loving remembrances of His mother, His prayers to the Father in heaven, showed men how far they were removed from true religion. Temples, ceremonies, fast days and forms of worship were mockery unless they enabled worshipers to do what Christ had done. A cup of cold water in the Master's name, genuine forgiveness, the human touch, a chance word, humble and devout recognition of a Divine power, were real evidence of a true worshiper. He made us better by making us different; He gave us a Divine Spirit.

When Christ offered His body to be broken, we must not forget that this body was a human body, not the spiritual body of the resurrection which passed through closed doors and quickly appeared from place to place. The body on the Cross was the actual body of a man limited in physical movements, capable of suffering pain; a body similar to our own yet a body which must be sacrificed to meet all the requirements of the Old Testament law. This sacrifice completed the sacrifice which Abraham was willing to make, but God prevented him from making; this sacrifice was a willing libation that the world might be saved by the blood which poured from it. His body was racked with the most terrible physical torture to save us the mental distress of not being sure of our soul and doubting our standing before God.

The work of the Cross was justified, it had reconciled us to God. Anyone who has ever questioned whether he had a right to approach God or doubted whether God was favorably disposed toward him or his loved ones, knows how wonderful the joy of knowing these doubts and fears were destroyed when Christ bore on His lone body our sins. Only the Cross enables God to accept sinful man as Righteousness. "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect (I Cor. 1:17)." "As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world (Gal. 6:12, 14)."

OBSTACLES PERMANENTLY REMOVED.

Having slain the enmity thereby: The word "slain" is the important word; debts have been cancelled and then renewed; enemies have been scattered to reunite and destroy; troubles are removed only to spring into new life; difficulties disappear within life only to rise in greater strength. The death of Christ put a final end to the enmity between Jew and Gentile, and God and man. Christ's atoning death did not merely wound, it killed and abolished forever. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross (Col. 2:14)." We were helpless to extricate ourselves until Christ came.

Phil. 4:19 goes further and assures us that God is able to supply all needs of all people. There is a tendency to feel that as we differ from one another in physical appearances, so our problems are apt to be different from any that have preceded or are now existing. Christ let us know that having made us, He knows us and has anticipated and provided for every emergency. "Ask and ye shall receive." "We are strengthened with all might according to his glorious power unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness (Col. 1:11)." There is nothing which God has that is not ours. "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell (Col. 1:19)." His fulness is ours.

Enmity includes anything which keeps a man from accepting Christ as his personal Savior. It includes every obstacle to peace of the soul. It embraces all those mental or spiritual difficulties which, occasioned by the sin which so easily besetting us, blinds us to the necessity of surrender to Christ. Enmity dulls our hearing—we lose the still small voice. Enmity hardens our hearts to resist His love; it stupifies our understanding to rebel against His desire to give our all to Him. When we become reconciled to God, we can look back upon former living with better appreciation of our sad condition without Him. The hatred, scorn, indifference and

suspicion which seemed so justified, becomes nothing short of folly; the sectional, racial and class distinctions were so insignificant; the differences in creeds and faiths were mole-hill mountains. "For which cause we faint not; but through our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day (II Cor. 4:16)."

XVII.

P E A C E

"And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." —EPH. 2:17.

A VOLUNTARY VISIT.

And came: Paul does not refer here so much to the birth in the manger, though the wonder of it never ceases, as he does to the resurrection from the grave which brought new hope to discouraged disciples, new life to the church and gave new birth to the grave. The growth of the first century church lay not only in the presence of the Holy Spirit which worked with great power, but also in the fact that their leader had done what no one else had done, namely, rise from the grave of His own free will and leave this earth without dying. Lazarus had come from the tomb to return to it, but Jesus came from the tomb of Joseph of Arimathæa and ascended into heaven as all of us shall come from our graves in response to the call from above.

Life in Christ was like and yet unlike the spark of immortality in ourselves. We know we are immortal. We believe the grave is not the end but we of ourselves are unable even though immortal to arise from the grave. Christ of His own free will, as a member of the Trinity, came from the grave and showed Himself to men so that we might be comforted. The sum total of our knowledge of the future life is not great. We know our loved ones will be easily recognized; we are positive we live in God's presence never to die again. There is no pain, hunger, thirst, no day or night, no want in heaven; we are happy. His present freedom from the limitations of an earthly existence tells us our future worship of God will not separate us from those who shared with us a belief in God. How we praise God for His coming.

GOOD NEWS THROUGH CHRIST.

And preached peace: His voice is not heard today except as He speaks through His disciples. We think for a moment of the words which came from His own lips and the joyful news He brought to the eleven despondent disciples, to that sorrowing mother and her friends, and to all that are living in despair and sin. He preached "peace." The first word spoken by the risen Christ to his disciples was "peace" (John 20:19). He wanted them to be at peace with God and at peace with each other, at peace with their enemies and at peace with the world. Peace must start from within, for unless there is harmony in the mind and actions, it is useless to expect to find peace in human relations or worship of God. Christ lived the peace He preached. Others found it while in His presence. The desire to possess His peace became a universal longing. Whenever friends met and separated, their prayer was that the peace of Christ and of God might be with them until met again. There were wars, discords, jarred homelife; business was not all a sweet song, the soul was a scarred battlefield, and society was in constant turmoil, but the greeting kept fanning the spark of hope that some day the dove of peace might come to make her home among them and usher in a reign of universal peace.

Since Adam and Eve peace has been one of the great longings of the human heart. We are told in Acts (3:26; 10:36) that God raised up Jesus and sent Him to bless us with this peace. "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ." Romans (10:15) speaks of peace as beautiful and intensely desirable. "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring good tidings of good things." We are calmed by the assurance of the second chapter of Luke: "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye

shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men (Luke 2:10-14)." Christ's message is eternal. "And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you (Luke 24:36)." He quiets our fears. "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And after eight days again his disciples were within and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you (John 20:19, 21, 26)."

We spoke a moment ago of "preach" as referring to actual words from the living lips of Christ. We begin but we do not end here. He conversed with and preached to His disciples. They absorbed His words and as they understood them, shared their convictions with others. "That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles (Acts 26:23)." The result was to be expected. Others received His Spirit and other hearts burned as did those two who walked on the road to Emmaus. From this beginning His words have echoed throughout all the centuries. Today He preaches through our testimony and lives. Those who hear us will be lead to preach to others and so throughout all ages to the end of the world the news of peace will be scattered. Praise God, His voice is never silent. Recipients of peace always speak for Him. Are we silent? What is the message of our lives? How often do we communicate our gift from God? Can we honestly tell others we have found this peace and can others see this peace in us? It was for this, Christ came and preached.

THE REACH OF JESUS.

To you that were afar off and to them that are nigh: Gentiles were afar off in Paul's day. They worshiped gods, but not Christ; they had temples built by men but no living church. The Jews were nigh, having enjoyed confident relations with God for many generations. In this class might also be included those who like the Philippian jailer were near to the kingdom and yet had not entered. Jesus preached almost exclusively to the Jews of His time. Others heard Him and probably more outside the Jewish nation followed than came from within, but, beginning with the Pentecostal church and under the leadership of Paul, the gospel was to be broadcast to any who might listen. As the air is filled today with messages broadcast around the world for any who desire to tune in and receive, so peace, preached by Christ, heralded by angels, explained by the church and taught in the Scriptures, reaches every corner of the universe and bears fruit in the hearts of men. There is no palace or hovel, no metropolis or hamlet, no king or outcast of society that cannot equally possess all that Christ has to offer. The prophet Isaiah sounded a clarion call: "Peace, peace to him that is afar off and to him that is near saith the Lord and I will heal him (57:19)." A warning is given to the wicked who have no peace. Sin can never bring a quiet conscience. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked (Isa. 57:21)." Sin prevents reunion and works against reconciliation. Sin lives in godlessness, despair, darkness, enmity, alienation and death. Peace lives in an atmosphere of life, faith, love, friendship and brotherhood. This peace can be ours, when we become reconciled to God and to each other in brotherly love.

XVIII.

ACCESS TO THE TRINITY

"For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." —EPH. 2:18.

THE METHOD OF SALVATION.

For through him we both have access: Paul might have been called a Trinitarian. He makes frequent mention, as in this verse, of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In the first chapter of this letter he acknowledges these three distinct personalities and beings. He closes this chapter by referring to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Let us follow his thought. *For through him:* He brings Christ into prominence. He had seen Christ on the Damascus Road and by this unique experience shared with the apostles the condition of apostleship: They must have seen the risen Lord. Christ opened many doors for disciples. Contrast the ritual of the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus with the open welcome of Hebrews: "Having therefore brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water (10:19-22)." He gave access unto the Father. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me (John 14:6)."

We both: The brotherly feeling existing between Jew and Gentile came from Christ. This was not without struggle; it took many years to wipe out fears which had developed throughout the centuries. The tenth chapter of Acts describes the surprise and opposition which greeted the idea that Jews and Gentiles had equal access to the Father and entered by

the same door at the same time. Some saw danger in this new freedom. Join hands in business but be separate in religion; greet each other as brethren in the market-place but keep away from the attitude of brothers. Christ removed pretence and opened wide the door. Worship of God was not to be confined to exclusive clubs with memberships and pass words. "Whosoever will let him come and drink of the water of life freely." Friendship must be solid. Nearness to Christ implied nearness to all who gather about the Cross. Birth still gave the name Jew or Gentile, but religion dispelled it. Christ had no scorn for the outcast nor did He gather His garments from a sinner. Both Jew and Gentile must amalgamate, neither can hold point of advantage nor disadvantage in nearness to Christ. Even the eleven disciples received no special place of honor at His right or left hand. Christ came to show us the Father. Here He gives us access to the Father and live with Him. If man was ever to find God, Christ must show the way. Christ said, "I am the door, no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Christ having shown us the way and given us access, let us take advantage of His instructions and follow. As all people, even the priest, drew near to God, we through Christ our High Priest, must draw near. Sin closed the way. It must be opened. Christ has opened it. The way being open, let us enter and have free access to the Father.

Have access: Having "access" means that while yet strangers and aliens we were accepted, were completely pardoned and justified and made sons of God. As sons we have the right to come and go as we please. We have been given a master-key which opens every door of the Father's home. We need never knock again; we have access to God who knows our trials and hears us. Christ will ever make intercession for us. "By whom also we have access by faith unto this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God (Rom. 5:2)." In order to reach the throne of God we must come first to the Cross; we must die with Christ and rise with Christ. As Christ came to do the will of Him that sent Him so we must do God's will in all the world. "Jesus saith

unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me. and to finish his work (John 4:34).” “That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him (John 5:23).” “Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me (John 7:16).” “He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings; and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me (John 14:24).” “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me (John 14:6).” “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit (I Pet. 3:18).” These two verses are placed in direct contrast to the description of the Day of Atonement as is given to us in the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus. Christ Himself is the way. “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh: And having a high priest over the house of God: Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water (Heb. 10:19-22).” This equality with Him makes certain changes in us. Paul symbolizes our union with Him in various figures soon to be developed—we are one family, one building, one temple, one commonwealth.

THE POWER OF SALVATION.

By one Spirit: “By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God (Rom. 5:2).” We are united by one Spirit to the Father. We are saved through Christ, but having been saved there is work to be done. The Spirit of Pentecost is to descend upon us, dwell in our hearts, penetrate our inner consciousness, animate our desires, possess our ambitions, put words in our mouth, and lead us forth. “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion

of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen (II Cor. 13:14).” Salvation has been described as a process which lifts a soul out of the mire and places it on a pinnacle. God reaches down for our souls, struggling and enmeshed beyond hope of freedom and lifts us into new freedoms. But in saving us from ourselves and our sins He employs the consent of our will. The same will which chooses evil must choose good; the same will which opens the door to temptation must also open the door to Christ and the same will which separated us from Him opens the door and draws us surely and certainly to Himself. “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:14-16).” “But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them (Heb. 7:24, 25).”

END OF SALVATION.

Unto the Father: If Christ is the door and if the Holy Spirit is the power, the Father is the end of our salvation. Christ came to prepare us for the presence of God. No one would dare seek audience with a king and come into royal presence without proper garb. Christ came to put us at ease, by going in advance to be there to introduce us when we arrive. “Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God (John 20:17).” What other religion can boast such relationship?

Herein lies one point of Christian supremacy. We shall see the one worshiped and have fellowship with Him. The children of Israel could not see God. No man ever beheld

the face or form of God. They dare not approach near to Him. The Holy of holies was veiled. But our heavenly Father is to be a Father to his children. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him (Psa. 103:13)." We have every right to go to Him as we would to an earthly father. The soul came from God; He breathed into us the breath of life. The soul returns to God and remains with Him forever to enjoy Him and to be enjoyed by Him.

Picture this heavenly home and live with this vision before you. See the heavenly Father who planned redemption, and gave His Son as a loving sacrifice, waiting to receive us.

In concluding the picture of our standing and of our state, Paul holds before us the glory of Christianity—a new man approved of God and found in all elements of society, rich and poor, peasant and king, high and low. Our standing is that of a son of God. Our state should be one of perfect union with Him. Christ makes all equal in their approach to Him. We now turn to verses 19-22, where Paul gives us a picture of the church as a temple for the habitation of God through the Spirit.

XIX.

CHILDREN OF GOD

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."
—EPH. 2:19.

This verse is like a cap-stone for the Old Testament. Moses with his movable tabernacle and Solomon with his glorious temple anticipated what was to be in the New Jerusalem. Jerusalem of Christ's day was a flourishing city. Its temple area was sacred to the Jews. Here they worshiped God. This temple of hewn stone soon lay in crumbling ruins like many of its predecessors. A new temple was shortly to be built of living stones. Those who accept Christ become stones of a heavenly city not made with hands, nor destroyed by human hands. They become children in God's house. Some see in this verse a fulfilment of the three heavenlies of II Cor. 12. The lower one being the city of which every believer is a full privileged citizen; the higher one is the household of God in which believers are like sons in privilege; and the highest is the temple of the Lord in which every believer is a living stone. Others believe Paul is describing privileges of all Christians and is reminding us of the close communion we may have with our Lord.

NOW ALL IS DIFFERENT.

Now therefore ye: In view of the atoning work of Christ and because of the reconciling work of Christ on the Cross, all who accept Christ's plan of salvation are entitled to the privileges He is about to describe. Paul particularly addresses the Gentile at this point lest they forget the marvelous privileges which are theirs.

CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS.

Are no more strangers and foreigners: Paul has a very direct and plain spoken way of driving home his point. He quite frequently calls attention to life before Christ and life after Christ. The happiness and peace of the Christian is that of a natural born citizen rather than the uncertain, in secure protection offered by a country to a non-naturalized visitor or temporary, tolerated resident liable to be removed at any moment. A certain amount of pleasure is derived from wandering over the world, traveling through a foreign country or even in owning property there. But this cannot compare with the happiness felt by one who has a natural right by birth to protection from his flag. As a citizen he takes his part in planning the security of his country and is willing to defend his native land and property with his life. Those outside of Christ are like sight-seeing, camping tourists. Their curiosity draws them occasionally to church. They may even share in reverence for the Holy Scripture and in accepting many of the teachings of Christ but they are strangers to Christ and foreigners to the living church until they personally confess Him as Savior before men and become His known disciple. Those who have not experienced rebirth, like immigrants, never have the security and comfort which comes to a native son.

What is your attitude toward Christ? That of a stranger who has no home, no protection, no privileges, no interests or that of a son? Do you belong to another? Do you feel on equal terms with anyone who believes in Christ the world over? We will always be pilgrims in this life—our citizenship is in heaven. "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which was against the soul (I Pet. 2:11)." The Jews can thank God for the end of their captivity and wanderings. "And God spake on this wise, that his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years (Acts 7:6)." They shall no more be strangers and sojourners, nor shall we! Christ's

work is finished. Faith gives us admittance. The old things are passed away.

HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP.

But fellowcitizens: We are citizens of heaven. The Jews were happy because they were God's chosen people. Though having shifting boundaries, they retained their identity throughout the centuries. Nations rose and vanished; the Jew continued.

The Christian maintains his identity on earth and in heaven. "But ye are come unto Mount Sion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven and to God the judge of all and to the spirits of just men made perfect (Heb. 12:22, 23)." If we are born in Christ we are Christians. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you have been baptized have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise (Gal. 3:26-28)." The Gentile has equal privileges. "But Jerusalem which is above is free which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice thou barren that bearest not, break forth and cry thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless, what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free (Gal. 4:26-31)." Our earthly life must anticipate our heavenly citizenship. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:20)." Our citizenship involves responsibilities. "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and

he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name (Rev. 3:12).” The nations of the earth will be gathered under His leadership. “And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine on it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor to it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring glory and honor of the nations into it (Rev. 21:21-26).” God prepares a city for its citizens. “For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city (Heb. 11:10-16).”

The Roman was proud of his citizenship because it gave him definite exemption, privileges and honors.. It gave him the right of protection from his enemies. Because the Christian belongs to Jesus, the whole armor of God is available to him. He receives protection from the omnipotent Heavenly

Father and knows his requests will be heard. Instances of answered prayer are too frequent to mention. Have the courage of Daniel and Paul. "I will not leave you nor forsake you." Look the world in the eye and testify of Him. "Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel (Phil. 1:27)."

There are vast differences between citizens of any country. Some hold their citizenship in high esteem, carefully obeying laws; others play with privileges and seek every known method to evade. They want opportunities and protection but no sacrifice, denial, limitation or check. The same is true of believers in Christ and members of the visible church. The one an eternal, the other perish with their day. Moses, David, Abraham, loyal prophets, priests, kings and patriarchs live today. So also the apostles and heroes of modern faith. These lived for eternity and became eternal. What of the great bulk of the world's population of all ages? They have gone into oblivion for holding citizenship lightly.

The Jew who had no boundaries to his land and a changing earthly kingdom valued citizenship highly. Our earthly kingdom is as far-flung as the world. Our king is King of kings, to be crowned Lord of all—lift high His royal diadem and let us crown Him King in our life. We have a kingdom within ourself, Christ must be Lord of this. Think of heavenly things rather than earthly things. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:20)." Find comfort in this hope, to stand up against the trials of the moment. Through Christ we are fellow citizens with the faithful of all time. What a glorious fellowship of believers.

WHO ARE SAINTS.

With the saints: The Christians of all ages, the body of believers, Christians in general or the chosen ones of all times are saints. It is not necessary to die to be a saint; it is neces-

sary to overcome the world. Each one of us is a potential saint. It is within our power to live our life as a member of the body of Christ so that we may be properly called saints on earth. This does not imply sinlessness, but Christ-likeness. I wonder how many are living up to this possibility of sainthood. Do we believe we can be saints or do we want to be saints? We are to be fellow-citizens with the saints of yesterday, today and tomorrow. This implies congeniality, sympathetic interest and companionship. Christ's loving sacrifice will be our central theme. May no sin or exercise of self-will rob us of the God-given privilege to gather with the saints in glory. Faith in Christ will transform us into saints.

GOD'S HOUSEHOLD.

And of the household of God: First Paul speaks of being brought near by the blood of Christ. He then describes our privileges as those of a citizen by birth. Here he goes a step further, as though this were not enough, and says we are members of the household of God. There are many Americans; few have passed the portals of the White House as guests and fewer still have the intimate privilege of coming and going as they choose. Every Christian is not only an invited guest of God, but also a son, with the natural honor of making our home with Him and possessing everything a child is privileged to have who lives in the same house with his father. As members of God's family. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith (Gal. 6:10)." We have obligations as members of His household. "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel (I Tim. 5:8)." We may share the unpopularity of Christ. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not because it knew him not (I John 3:1)." How many are availing themselves of their household privileges? How many have that sense of nearness to God? How many would be comfortable in being that near to Him?

Holiness begets holiness. Jesus has transforming power. To be near Him is to be like Him.

A member of the family feels at home; a stranger frequently feels ill at ease. We are to feel at ease in God's presence. A spot on our heart or mar on our character causes us to feel strange before God. We must be immaculate. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26)." We must hold fast. "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end (Heb. 3:6)." Christ is the firstborn and elder brother in a large family which includes all saints throughout the history of the church. We are sons of God not by birth but by adoption. Let us not miss any of our privileges.

There is another side to this question. While membership in a household gives privileges, it also means sharing responsibility and duties. If one member tries to escape bearing a share of household responsibility, and added burden and strain comes upon others. In the household of God every member has a task. All are working members. Christianity is not a big baseball game with a few players and crowded bleachers. If active as sitting members, observing members or criticising members, get into the game and fight the good fight of faith.

XX.

A LIVING TEMPLE

"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."
—EPH. 2:20.

BELIEVERS ARE PART OF AN ETERNAL TEMPLE.

And are built: The Temple of Diana at Ephesus, stronghold, of paganism, was one of the most beautiful buildings of its time. Around this temple centered all the art, religion and commerce of a wide surrounding territory. It was a synonym of magnificence. A second noble example of religious architecture was the Jewish Temple at Jerusalem. The spot had been venerated for generations. Temples were built by one generation to be rebuilt by following generations. Whatever magnificence might be associated with either the Temple of Diana or the temple at Jerusalem was insignificant in comparison with the glory of the throne of God and the proud portion of every faithful follower of Christ. The natural beauty and power of the Temple at Ephesus or Jerusalem was to be excelled by the spiritual beauty of a living church. These earthly buildings were constructed of stone; the new Jerusalem was to rise upon a foundation laid by the Son of God and have living stones in its walls. Pagan temples and the Hebrew synagogues were visible, the church of God is invisible. Buildings made by man perish. God's buildings begin in his earth and endure throughout eternity. No archæologist would ever puzzle over inscriptions on stones of this heavenly temple, eternal as God. Every believer is a living stone built into this living temple. Our lives must have no flaws. "For we are labourers together with God; ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth

thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon (I Cor. 3:9, 10)." Christ is the Chief Corner Stone. "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious; but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner. And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient; whereunto also they were appointed (I Pet. 2:4-8)." Faith prepares us. "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost (Jude 20)." The man is wise who builds on Christ. "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock (Matt. 7:24, 25)." The Word of God will build us up. "And now brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified (Acts 20:32)." "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth (I Tim. 3:15)." "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his (II Tim. 2:19)."

The Master Workman is Christ by whose blood mankind was redeemed. The order in which these living stones are placed is determined by the Father. An anxious mother was somewhat concerned as to the position her two boys were to occupy in this future building. Christ assured her this was unimportant. It is honor enough to be a part of this great building; God determines place and standing. May

we all be like clay in the hands of the Potter yielding ourselves to His touch and hand. He can fit us for the place which we are to occupy and transform us into what He would have us be.

BUT ONE FOUNDATION.

Upon the foundation: Some texts include the word "strong." The Greek word for "foundation" implies something more eternal and everlasting than marble, granite or stone; something of another world which links itself inseparably with God, the Creator of the world, who laid the foundation of the deep, the earth and the heavens. It signifies not merely the base upon which a structure is to rise, but something so firmly attached to that which rises above that it seems a part of the whole. The church is to be builded upon Christ. Recall Jesus' words to Peter, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church." Every generation of Christians represents stones upon which later tiers are built. The faith, the doctrine, knowledge, experience and grace of our forefathers forms the inherited basis of our own faith and confidence in Him. All stones will not be identical. "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues (I Cor. 12:28)." God prepares us for our niche. "Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; and labour, working with our own hands; being reviled, we bless; being persecuted we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat; we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day (I Cor. 4:11-13)."

The foundation of Christ is not His teachings, His example, His Spirit, nor yet His Divine Sonship; it is Christ's risen, exalted and glorified body. It is folly to build upon any other foundation. How many lives have been lost in an effort to substitute other leaders "just as good." Ethical doctrine, culture, the Golden Rule, social service are like shifting sands and stubble—they crumble because lacking the specification of God's Word. Christ is the only foundation.

Is my life built on Him? "For we are labourers together with God; ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (I Cor. 3:9-11)."

FELLOW-WORKERS WITH CHRIST.

Of the apostles and prophets: This grouping of words has various interpretations. A question arises as to whether these limit themselves to New Testament apostles and prophets or whether Old Testament prophets and apostles are included. A second question arises. Is this foundation the doctrine of the apostles and prophets or is it the Person of Christ only?

Two passages emphasize the resistance of apostolic effort. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will? (Heb. 2:3, 4)"; "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God. Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment (Heb. 6:1, 2)."

The work of prophets and apostles was undoubtedly a foundation upon which others build. Even our faith is established upon the testimony and work of those who had seen the risen Christ and those inspired, gifted writings of early teachers whose message form the background of scholars who followed them. In a certain sense, it might be possible to combine both views, but Christ, in the great plan of the ages and in the fulness of time was the starting point. Outstanding religious leadership comes from assimilating Him. He produced Luther, and Wesley, and Witherspoon, and governed their lives.

Those favoring inclusion of Old Testament heroes of faith

who were evangelists before their time, quote, "Then he said unto them, O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken (Luke 24:25)." "But those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that followed after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days (Acts 3:18, 21, 24)." "To him give all the prophets witness that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins (Acts 10:43)." "But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets according to the commandments of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith (Rom. 16:26)." Both Christ and early New Testament writers honored the witness of the prophets. God established certain facts by these prophets even though their hearers were dull of understanding and slow of heart to believe. Each of them and all of them were building foundations. "And the wall of the city. had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (Rev. 21:14)."

Those including New Testament prophets and apostles quote James who warns us to contend earnestly for the faith delivered by the apostles and prophets. Apostles were not necessarily witnesses to the resurrection. The doctrine of both was essentially the same. Prophets were particularly inspired and gifted teachers upon whose doctrines, believers were established. On occasion they were inspired with knowledge of the future as Agabus prophesies, "There shall be great dearth throughout the world (Acts 11:28)." They taught spiritual doctrines (I Cor. 14). They were pillars, "And when James, Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision (Gal. 2:9)." Numerous exhorters such as Judas and Silas (Acts 15:32) might be in this group of New Testament

prophets. Barnabas and Paul with other apostles are added. But note the truth given them to preach is none other than that "for other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Christ Jesus (I Cor. 3:11)." The apostles erect on the life and example of Christ, a superstructure, which, rising throughout the ages, becomes the church—the living body of Christ. While "all scripture is given by inspiration of God," while both Old and New Testaments are closed, God still reveals Himself in the work done by His disciples. We are laying foundations of faith for those who follow. But our life must be built upon that which has gone before. As they built well, let us continue by giving our children a proper start in life. A child may rise to high levels but the faith of that child had its beginning in the faith of the parent. The parent's faith rests upon fundamental truths, on which the church is built. The church is founded upon Christ.

JESUS CHRIST.

Jesus Christ himself: It takes an orator to emphasize these words. They need to be spoken rather than read. The stage is set, curtains are drawn, the audience is seated. After an introduction, the curtains open and a single figure emerges—Jesus Christ. No other character can take His place. God sent Him for this particular purpose. Christ recognized the completion of His mission when He said, "It is finished." Christ belongs on a pedestal. He rises sublime as Mount Everest. None can equal Him or approach Him. Pilate recognized, too late, this noble preeminence when turning to the grinding, inflamed mob he said, "Behold the man." Paul simply says, "Behold Jesus Christ himself"—the only Foundation upon which we can build, separate from all others, holding a position equal with God.

SUPPORT AND STRENGTH.

Being the chief corner stone: The picture suggested is that of a stone so large as in itself to be foundation for a building, a single stone having its ends uplifted so the walls might rest upon it, be contained within it and be supported by the end of its projections. Christ is not only Foundation, but

also Corner-Stone. One Greek word covers these three words, "the chief corner stone." It is one stone, giving perfect support, sustaining, holding together and completing the building. "Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious; but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner. And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient; whereunto also they were appointed (I Pet. 2:6-8)." "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste (Isa. 28:16)."

The corner stone referred to is therefore different from that found in modern architecture, where after several tiers have been erected, a small corner stone is placed where it can be easily seen. This corner stone is above the foundation. It tells the date of erection; historical papers may be contained in it. Its purpose is ornamental and historical. The Biblical corner stone was the most important stone. It gave directions to the walls and strength to the superstructure. Christ alone occupies this unique position. "He is the foundation (I Cor. 3:11)." The whole structure of the church falls, apart from Him. That Spirit which holds it together is broken if He is not the cause of it and the sustaining power of it.

It seems strange a figure prophesied as far back as David should have been ignored: "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner (Psa. 118:22)." "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:11, 12)." "As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offense; and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed (Rom. 9:33)." Human nature is contrary. Most of us want to make changes, leave our touch, inject our own personality and have things our way. God's

way is best. The larger the building committee, the greater the number of changes suggested when building a modest cottage, skyscraper or chapel for the worship of God. It is normal therefore to expect this chief Corner-stone will be neglected by some who search to find something else to put in its place. But these efforts come to nought. The Jewish synagogue has neglected Christ, hence its waning importance; the church exalts Christ and grows in power, purpose and numbers.

In conclusion: what is it that makes us living stones in this building. Our faith in Christ. This living temple must have nothing less than the best material. "And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house (I Kings 5:17)." He must have His way with us. Our confession of Christ before men, our testimony of a saving faith, our preaching of the Word will be used to hasten the coming of God's kingdom on earth and the completion of that great temple which praises Him. "Christ crucified is the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets and preachers. Christ glorified is the crowning completion of the entire structure which began with the coming of Christ into the world and ends with the creation of a new heaven and a new earth." May no flaw enter through us.

XXI.

THE CHURCH AS THE TEMPLE OF GOD

"In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord." —EPH. 2:21.

CHRIST INDISPENSABLE.

In whom: We have seen Christ as not only the chief corner stone but also the foundation of this new church. Paul sees Christ as the Spirit which must pervade the whole. As the law of gravity holds not only the foundation but the walls, partitions and roof, so the law of Christ holds in close and vital union the believers of all ages who comprise this living body of Christ; in His life and from His work, they derive inspiration and strength; from Him they receive the work which tells the place they occupy in this building. Without Christ there would be no temple; without Him the various conflicting and divergent elements of society could not be unified. Without Him the church throughout all the ages would not exhibit that growth which must characterize it until the time when Christ comes again.

THE WHOLE AS A UNITY.

All the building: The church of Diana at Ephesus was not a single building, but rather a combination of several buildings all related to the whole and serving various functions in the worship of Diana of the Ephesians. The same is true of the temple area of the Jewish Synagogue with its porches, courts, towers and divided areas contributing to the worship of God; various ceremonies were assigned to designated points but it took all the area to be the temple of Jehovah. Paul uses these illustrations to bring home to the motley group that followed him, the unity which was to be evident among them as believers in Christ. They were to be brothers;

none were to exclude others from their fellowship; none could isolate themselves as a privileged class; there must be no constraint in their communion with each other; there could be no Pharisaical aloofness. As they were both subject to the mind of Christ, their one desire to worship Him took their eyes from themselves and caused them to forget distinctions which would lead to jealousy, oppression and bitterness.

The word "all" was therefore most important. Regardless of talents possessed, special recognition by the churches or different forms of their worship, the church at Jerusalem, at Ephesus, at Corinth, at Antioch, at Rome, at Laodicea and at the uttermost parts of the world were all part of the holy temple. All of them had their place and function in this new church. This church inspired by the Spirit of Christ and ministering to Him would not be completed until Christ comes again. This point needed emphasizing then and it requires repetition now. We are apt to lose sight of the principles of the early church in our eagerness to advance the cause of our denomination, sect, locality or diocese. God made a plan at the foundation of the world. Unlike the architect, He did not need to make any changes in these plans; He knows the contribution of each generation and each age. Only as each individual workman or Christian carries out His plan, can this building with all of its component parts be what was in the mind of God. The great cathedrals of Europe were not built in a single generation. At times work was going on simultaneously on several parts. In some cases centuries were required for their completion. Every workman counted it an honor to leave behind his efforts, however small, in the completed whole. So each Christian should take pride in being called to be one of the laborers in bringing the kingdom of God on earth.

A PERFECT UNION.

Fitly joined together: Skyscrapers were not being built in the New Testament period, yet the manner of their building perfectly describes the union which is to exist among all

Christians. As beams are riveted in their place and cross arms give support to structural weakness, so various contributions of Christianity add to the work of the past and lay a foundation for future work. The whole produces harmony.

The church is not a mass of Christians any more than a building is a mass of stones. Christ must prepare our hearts. Jews and Gentiles were to have equal place in the new church. This was not true at the time of Christ. Paul became the first apostle to the Gentiles; the worship and racial differences of Jew and Gentile separated them; but their belief in Christ was to unite them. No longer is there high and low; mutual sympathy, brotherly love and loyalty to Christ makes them one.

Paul used the present or progressive tense to describe this union. This joining together is taking place every day. A chain is no stronger than its weakest link. May the church today be as strong as the church of Apostolic times; the church of the Reformation, the church of the Renaissance. As the world grows smaller and science and inventions bring us closer together in understanding and human relations, religion should be the tie that binds so securely that there is no desire to be separated by misunderstanding or war. Commerce can lead to new acquaintances but religion binds men's hearts and unites them with the Spirit of love and the blessing of the Heavenly Father.

The church of which we are speaking is the ideal church resting on Christ as a foundation, and growing throughout the ages. Paul refers to it in the fifteenth and sixteenth verses of the fourth chapter by comparing it to the body symmetrically, fitly, harmoniously, exactly and compactly joined together, every part having its function and contributing to the welfare of the whole. The church is a living institution. A living Christ dwells in the hearts of every believer. He changes our spirit to His. He is gradually uniting life with life and His life with ours in an inseparable fashion.

In a building framed together, each part receives and

gives strength. There are key stones, the corner stone, cop stones and ordinary building stones. Each Christian has special gifts or talents; some can speak, others preach; some pray, others visit; some teach, some perform this function and that, but the sole purpose of the individual is to work toward the building of an institution honoring Christ, its Founder. When Christ is neglected, that portion of the building crumbles. Life must be controlled by Him as the stone is submissive to the hand of the master worker who properly fits, shapes and cements it to the whole. Unless we are willing to let Christ take possession of us and use our abilities, there will be a structural weakness in the portion of His temple built in our time.

THE CHURCH IMPERFECT BUT STILL GROWING.

Growth: Growth is impossible where life does not exist; there must be a living organism in order to have life. It may be weak and have to struggle for its existence but there must be life in order to have growth; the more abundant the life the more vigorous the growth. Neglect and disuse can kill; sin produces death. The growth of the church is to be shown by more than increase of membership, pyramided assets, larger plants, mounting rolls of ministers and licentates or a church spreading in foreign and home fields. Each new convert adds to the church but the test of growth is in growth in grace, deepening consecration, reborn lives, more certain unity in service, application of the Golden Rule, applying the Sermon on the Mount, and development toward that perfection which was commanded, "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Each believer grows step by step, naturally and vitally into the living temple.

The growth of the church is similar to that of a living tree. "And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is THE BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build

the temple of the Lord (Zech. 6:12)." As each follower of Christ finishes his earthly life the whole structure of the ages becomes more fit for its intended purpose. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (I Pet. 2:5)." Now, return to the metaphore, the church as a building. The picture covers a vast area—the surface of this earth; there is activity in every quarter; workers are busy at their task; apparent confusion is coordinated actively—wheel within wheel, specialized workers coordinating their tasks. The end for which the beginning was made will be increasingly apparent. Anyone who has watched a large bridge develop or seen a skyscraper rise from a great hollow in the earth will appreciate the perfectness of the illustration. Every step is a step in advance; each stage adds to beautify and complete the ideal; there is no less of symmetry and strength. As one commentator expresses it, "Christians are not precious jewels which are tossed into heaven to scatter themselves, but are jewels which are brought into heaven and are made into a precious diadem where each stone gives its brilliance and adds glory to those that surround it or bring honor to the wearer."

DEDICATED TO GOD.

Unto a holy temple: The preposition "into" is possibly better than "unto." Heathen temples were sacred, but this one set apart for the service of God is holy. Here God lives and abides; it is an incomplete sanctuary, yet the eternal resting place of the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

Matthew (23:16) promises woe upon the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees because they forgot that holiness applies to lives as well as buildings; sin mars the beauty of a life and detracts from the holiness of worship in a temple. An imperfect life has limited uses, and mars the church. Thank God, the end is not yet. The temple is incomplete; the day is far spent, but there is still opportunity to take

time to be holy. Having found salvation, we dare not stop while our neighbor is lost. One stone cannot of its own volition help another, but we by the grace of God can lead another to the Cross. Therefore pray for Divine light and guidance to be led to the right person who needs cleansing and is ready to receive Christ.

This temple is to be everlasting and unlike the temple in which Jesus confounded the doctors. This church remains, the gates of hell cannot prevail against it; Satan with all his legion of angels cannot crush it. God dwells in this temple, gives it light and peace, brings His presence into it and transforms those who worship Him. "We shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is." As this church increases, we are brought nearer to that time when there shall be no more sin, weakness or conflict. Followers shall approach that unity for which Christ prayed (John 17:17-26).

In one sense, each Christian is an individual stone in this church, in another sense, each heart is a temple of the Holy Spirit. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you (I Cor. 3:16)." "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? (I Cor. 6:19)." The following verse gives the penalty for failure to so have that change in our heart that it shall be a temple of the Spirit. "If a man defile or destroy the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy which temple ye are (I Cor. 3:17)."

THE CHRIST LIFE.

In the Lord: This letter to the Ephesians frequently uses these words, "of the Lord," "in the Lord," "in Christ." Christ is a Guide to all truth; Christ is a Leader directing the activities of His followers; Christ is the Captain of our salvation with authority to rule; Christ is Head of the building, its guiding Genius. "The Lord is the living Bond and Principal, a Secret of growth and sanctity." In Him we live and

move and have our being, in Him we have that second birth, in Him we grow, with Him we change from grace unto grace. Let each resolve to do his part to prevent the glory of the temple from being tarnished and dulled in any of its parts. Seek the abiding presence of His Spirit which will bring peace to our lives and give others an evidence of Christ's Spirit dwelling within.

XXII.

DESTINY OF THE CHURCH OF GOD

"In whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit." —EPH. 2:22.

GOD LIVES IN ME.

In whom ye also: These words had particular meaning for Gentile Christians. The Jews expected to be eventually saved by the coming Messiah but only by being proselytes were the Gentiles to inherit their blessings. Since Christ every Ephesian Christian is a potential heir of God as well as the Jews, partakers of the Old Testament promises. This is brought out more fully in the sixth verse of the third chapter—the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, members of the same body and fellow-partakers of the promises of Christ through the gospel. Those who once were strangers, dead in trespasses and sin are now children of God—living stones in the temple of God. Not a rough pile of stones but each one given a place where it fits, adding to the unity, beauty, strength, endurance and compactness of the whole. God lives in the Ephesian church as He also lives in every other church, as He lives in me.

A GROWING CHURCH.

Are builded together: I have seen trees growing from seedlings to great spreading forests; each year buds appear and branches stretch a little further; season adds to season until the marvelous trunk, wide spreading branches and a heaven-reaching top testify to growth. So the church is gradually, continuously rising. "Hell shall not prevail against it (Matt. 16:18)"; although its work is tried by fire and sword (Psa. 118:22). Amid the dust of conflict, the trial of orthodoxy and the debates as to the coming of Christ, souls are being saved, lives are banding themselves together for the service

of God and a place worthy of God is being formed. Some day when Christ comes again and the new earth and the new heavens are created, this temple will be dedicated and all will have a part in the glorious service. Then in the finished structure, we can look back with the architect to the excavation, disarrangement, noise and dust of construction and thank God that through His peace we are redeemed, with robes washed white in the blood of the Lamb; then we shall look back upon the work of centuries and see the branches of the church founded upon continents: then we shall see how every controversy, the spire of every church, the sermons preached, the lessons taught, the testimonies given, the hymns sung, prayers offered and lives lived have had their part in building this great temple in which God dwells. Not until we are either caught up with Him or changed into His likeness shall we see this picture. Are we changed? Are we sure of it? Do we have evidences of it within ourselves? Is our life gradually changing under the touch of His hand? Are we (I Pet. 2:5) as lively stones being built up a spiritual house? Do we through self-will ignore the opportunity of being builded with other believers into this beautiful temple and having a place in this the greatest cathedral of all time?

WE SHALL BE HIS ABODE.

For a habitation: A habitation is a dwelling-place, a permanent abode, not a summer residence. As man constructs a house in which to live, so God builds His church so that in it He can spend all eternity. Through all the ages He is working upon plans for this house—making it more complete, removing its faults, saving it from sin, vitalizing it with His Holy Spirit, sanctifying it with His presence, glorifying it with the risen Savior and all the time preparing it for a dwelling-place for Himself and those who love Him. In John (2:11) Jesus refers to His body as a temple. He wants us all to remember that our bodies are also temples and should be treated as such.

The Old Testament represents the dwelling-place of God between the cherubim; the New Testament Jewish temple

was an abiding place, but after the day of Pentecost, the Christian church became the temple of God in which and through which He shows Himself to the world and from which He appeals for disciples. Let us bear in mind however, that the church is composed only of those who are saved; the lost have no part. They may come as suppliants but only as they are born again can they have a vital part in this church. God needs a meeting place; the church is that place. He can be found anywhere, for God is everywhere, omnipresent, but in this temple dedicated to His worship, it is reasonable to expect that the world and the things of the world are excluded; that coming into its quiet, it is possible to feel God is waiting there to touch my life, take away discordant elements and bring that harmony with His will which all of us are seeking. "I will dwell in them and walk in them (II Cor. 6:16)." When you think of whom God is and then think of His dwelling in the hearts of men, it seems incredible, and yet there is His promise and we dare not deny it. Through faith we must accept it and believe that the life of God can have a place in my soul, but the soul must be clean and thoughts must be pure. As fresh clean air is essential to life, so cleanliness is next to godliness in living.

GOD LIVES WITH ME.

Of God: It is with reverence, hesitation and awe that these words are written; no less than God and no greater than God is to be our companion. Recall how Moses hesitated to come where God was known to be. He removed his sandals from his feet and shaved his head, wearing sackcloth and ashes. We can come closer than Moses and God comes closer to us than to Moses because of the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross; the kingdom of God is within us. We can see evidence of this in lives that are yielded, lives that have been transformed by that practice of the Golden Rule which becomes a standard of practice. Old things are passed away and all things are become new. We earnestly seek for the time when our work shall be done and we shall pass into the presence of God. The joy of the Christian thus becomes

different from the joy of those who have not this hope. For us death is the beginning and not the end. Although God uses the church to glorify Him, He dwells in temples not made with hands and in humble and contrite hearts. When we wish Him to come and abide with us, we must get the building ready for His coming. Pleasures may need to be given up, friends may be lost, habits may be changed, occupations may vary, but it is worth the effort. There will never be regret.

Christ is alive today. We see evidences of Him in the power within us. "For me to live is Christ"; because Christ lives in me.

THE SPIRIT IS CHRIST'S WITNESS.

Through the Spirit: The witness of Christ is the presence of His Spirit. The early church was baptized, professed their faith in Christ, sought others to follow them into the new faith, and prayed for the beauty of His holiness to keep them true to their new-found faith. God's Spirit is the Agent, the demonstrated Power; the Spirit of God "is the control, constraint and restraint of every believer's heart." Every activity of the Christian can be explained through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. All things are possible to those who possess this Spirit. Those who do not possess it find life hard, joy and pleasure absent and serious problems with them, but those who possess it, face the same obstacles with confidence, serenity and belief that in the end, right will triumph and the just shall be saved by faith. Every soul shall be a shrine of the Spirit. Have we been transformed and is every part of our being ready for Him to enter and make His abode with us?

CHAPTER THREE

I.

A PRISONER OF CHRIST

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles."
—EPH. 3:1.

SET APART BY GOD.

For this cause: This chapter concluding the standing of the Christian or his position before Christ, is somewhat broken. The first thirteen verses describe the mystery of the church which has been hidden from the past and gives a prayer for more fulness and knowledge. From the thirteenth verse to the end of the chapter, apparently Paul intended to request the prayers of fellow-Christians for him and other Christians; but suddenly he is reminded of the position which has been given to him as an apostle to the Gentiles and the prison in which this letter is being written. This causes him to digress from his intended purpose and describe his office and the method of obtaining it. He dedicated his life to carry out his commission to the Gentiles and for his purpose to give Gentiles equal rights, he found himself at Rome. Even here, he continues his work, hampered it is true, but by his letters communicating his zeal, giving others the benefit of his experience, and seeking their prayer and cooperation in building the spiritual temple in which God is to dwell.

The fifth chapter of Romans has a similar digression of thought; these add to the beauty of following thought. Only those who pass through difficult times can show the highest beauty of Christian character. The value of steel is enhanced by rolling and firing. An anchor proves its value if, in time of storm, it holds the ship from drifting on the rocks. The beauty of Paul's faith was not marred or soured or lost by his imprisonment.

Every Christian may find himself in situations as embarrassing and calling for as great heroism as did Paul in his prison. Will we be true? We have the same Christ to watch over us. Let us abide in Jesus as did Paul.

UNWORTHY BUT COMMISSIONED.

I Paul: It is with a sense of utter unworthiness and deep humility that he writes "I Paul." The one whom God has honored is none other than the Paul who breathed out threatnings and curses against the early Christians. The one who was commissioned to bring hope to the Gentiles and tell them that Christ died for them, was Paul the Jew, proud of his race and ancestry. It seems too wonderful to be true that he should be the one to lay foundations for churches throughout Asia Minor; that now he should be at Rome, the very heart of the Roman Empire, and talk to soldiers to whom he was chained; and members of Cæsar's household, holding the Cross before their eyes, telling them of the immortal hope which is theirs, and urge them to be true to Christ regardless of consequences, dying rather than denying Him. A second thought suggests itself. Paul, in spite of the vast work of his missionary journeys, still manages to give personal touch to the church at Ephesus. It is like receiving a letter from a man who has acquired fame, fortune and national recognition. Instead of a formal introduction, he uses your first name as of old, and shows the old relationship, above which he has not passed. Though Paul is in prison, he is still the same Paul known by all; the same Paul who used to talk to them, who baptized many of them and who entered their homes; this Paul is now writing this letter, praying for their guidance and hoping, if God leads the way, to come to them again.

Paul's feeling of humility is not limited to this letter. You find the same expression in other epistles. For example: "Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you (II Cor. 10:1)"; "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised Christ shall

profit you nothing (Gal. 5:2)"; "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister (Col. 1:23)."

THE CELEBRATED PRISONER.

The prisoner of Jesus Christ: There have been many famous prisoners, but none equaled Paul. Napoleon was an empire builder whose glorious liberty was confined on the Island of Elba. We do not find any such message as this from him. Instead, there was lament and sorrowed shame. He did not wage his battles for the cause of Christ, but under the impulse of selfish ambition. Hence the contrast between Napoleon and his confinement, and Paul in his prison. Paul's body might be bound but his soul was for ever free. Prayer can never be confined within prison walls. The soul is unfettered, requiring only the support of a believing heart and the help of God.

There might have been a difference in opinion as who could claim Paul as a prisoner. Rome could have said, "He is my prisoner, my soldiers are guarding him, his life is in my hands"; the Jews might have said, "He is my prisoner for had it not been for that tactless invitation given by Paul to Trophimus to enter into our temple, Paul never would have been arrested and now in Rome he waits for judgment"; the Gentiles might have said, "No, he is *our* prisoner; if he had been content to remain a Jew and to preach Christ as Savior of the Jews; if he had left us alone, he would still be free; his willingness to go to the far ends of the world to bring the story of Christ and labor that we might receive the gift of God's Spirit is the cause of his imprisonment; it was a self-sacrificing service in our behalf." But to all these suggestions Paul says, "No, you are all wrong; I may be a Jew and a Roman soldier may be chained to me in a Roman prison, and I may have preached to the Gentiles, but I am a prisoner of Christ; He has put me in chains, He owns me, I belong to Him and I have no desire to acknowledge al-

legiance to anyone else. I am His property; all my service is for His sake; my bonds are in Christ."

Paul constantly gloried in being counted worthy of being a prisoner of the Lord. He pleads in the fourth chapter, first verse of this epistle: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God (II Tim. 1:8)." In Philippians (1:7, 13, 14, 16), he is proud of his bonds. While they hamper him in his work, limiting the freedom of his physical body, they cannot lessen his longing that all might possess the consciousness of true Christians believers patterning their life after him and speaking the Word without fear.

Think, for a moment, of all we would have lost if there had been no imprisonment: Philemon, Colossians, Philippians, Second Timothy and Ephesians all were written in prison. How differently prisoners use their imprisonment! A few repent of their sins and find God. Some plan greater mischief and develop bitterness toward society. John Huss, while in a fortress on the Rhine, wrote some of his most beautiful messages. Martin Luther used his years of imprisonment as an opportunity to give the Holy Scriptures to Germany in the tongue of the people. For Huss, Luther and Paul there were dark moments. The imprisonment of their bodies could not help but leave a mark, but the fields were white for harvest, laborers were few, while they could not do as wished, they could use the hours for self-examination, consecration and prayer. Neither Cæsar nor Cicero ever gave voice in their orations to such wonderful passages as we find here. Neither ever penned such stimulating words as these: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God that ye might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil (Eph. 6:10, 11)."

These letters came from victories in his own life, from triumphs over temptation and self. There was that agonizing desire to bring the lost the good news of their salvation. His prayer echoed that found in Exodus: "Yet now, if thou wilt

forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written (32:32)."

There was nothing compulsory about his imprisonment. He willingly made his choice; Christ had the power to lay His cup aside, the angels would have done His bidding, but He had come to redeem man and must finish the task, so He endured the Cross. Paul had a kindred feeling. We glimpse it in: "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? (II Cor. 11:29)." Christ wept over Jerusalem. Jeremiah also wept: "Oh, that my eyes were fountains of water." Paul must have frequently gone to the hills overlooking some of the cities in which he preached and been stoned and cast out, longing to return and shield them from danger of their own blindness and sin. He knew Christ could save them and could restore the image of God which had been marred by their transgressions, so he dare not stop as long as life and strength were given to tell the story of his commission to as many as would listen. He was willing to be made all things to all men that he might by all means save some. "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak, became I as weak, that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men that I might by all means save some (I Cor. 9:19-22)." To be the greatest help to those who were looking to him for an example he said: "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not (I Cor. 10:23)." How joyful was his service! "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church (Col. 1:24)."

Do we have this intense Christlike desire to serve and tell the story of what He has done for us or of what we know He can do for others? If so, rest assured, the reward will

come which will be worth overlooking and forgiving a lot, letting the past stay behind, and pressing forward to the mark of the highest calling, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

As these words, "I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ" have inspired many a martyr to heroic deed, and have led many a missionary to the foreign field or caused an individual to separate himself from his family rather than deny his Christ, so they will always challenge faith. For the hope of Jesus Himself, be willing to be in bonds for the mystery of Christ. "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak of the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds (Col. 4:3)."

A TOUCHING APPEAL

For you Gentiles: Any Gentile visiting him in prison and hearing him say these words, should have been drawn to accept Christ. And yet when you think of the appeal Christ made and how indifferent the majority were to His words and how indifferent people still are to the Bible, we can see how very real Satan is, seeking to undo the work of God, hardening hearts, and turning away those who had yielded themselves. Some day the heart may be softened. Frequently a mother goes to her reward before her children realize her love and devotion. Christ had to die in order that the world might see in Him, their all and in all. Let us be willing to suffer always in the name of Christ, die for Him and be strengthened in Him. What a difference that makes! There are a great many things we do not think of doing in our own name and for our own sake, that we could not keep from doing in Christ's name and for His sake. Why? It is the Light that shines, it is the Voice that calls, and the Power which witnesses to the indwelling Spirit of God and Christ. So, let our light shine before men that others seeing our good works, may glorify the Father who is in heaven.

II.

THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST MADE KNOWN

"If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward."
—EPH. 3:2.

A POLITE REMINDER.

If ye have heard: These words are omitted in some of the translations and are spoken of by some as justifying the belief that Paul was possibly not the author of the Epistle to the Ephesians. However, the evidences in favor of his authorship are so great as to make it quite probable that these words are a polite reminder of that which they had frequently heard during the two years residence of Paul in Ephesus. He was assuring them that although he had been separated from them for some time, he was still the Divinely appointed apostle to the Gentiles and he wanted them to be true to the commission he had given them to preach the word and extend the invitation of Christ to all Gentiles to be members of the living church. Others see irony in these words. This hardly seems probable because it was contrary to the spirit of the writer. There is no question but that Paul had spoken to them of that commission given him in Acts 19:8-10; 20:17-24. There was still a great bitterness between Jews and Gentiles and those who understood that the middle wall of partition had been removed. Their recognition of the fact that Paul was in prison suffering in their behalf gave courage to the disciples and those who were faint-hearted. The imprisonment of Paul produced many Gentile converts.

GOD'S WORK BY ORDER.

Of the dispensation: Paul was well versed in the Old Testament law. Having studied at the school of Gamaliel, he could be counted among the learned Jewish men of his day; he

had further vision than the Jews of his time because of the revelation of Christ made to him. He could see that in the fulness of time God was gradually working out what He had ordained from the beginning of time; the days of the early church were just a portion of this time related to the Old Testament covenant and the new gospel of Christ and was the beginning upon which the church of all time was to be organized and developed. God works in an orderly fashion.

The word "dispensation" means rule, or the regulation of a household; that method of housekeeping which involves law and order. We are of the household of faith governed by laws of the Divine Being. Another meaning for "dispensation" is suggested by: "Let a man so account of himself as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries that the grace of God is a stewardship committed to us for our use and that accordingly is to be required of the knowledge which is ours (I Cor. 4:1, 2)." We are to communicate to others what we have received; we are to demonstrate in our lives the advantages of our Christian belief; we are to dispense to others the way which God has placed within our reach. "It is required of stewards that a man be found faithful." This is why Paul writes: "A dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me (I Cor. 9:16, 17)"; also, "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God (Col. 1:25)," and, "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God (I Pet. 4:10)."

This sacred task which had been given him revealed to him the responsibility of planning his work and the result of his ministry. His duty was to preach the gospel and continue his ministry; results were to be left to God. We plant, Apollos waters, but God gives the increase. The time in which we live demands the utilization of our talents, our voices, our lives. No churches of the future age has, can or will be able to do that which God has planned for this particular age. Are we taking our part?

THE ORIGIN OF THIS DISPENSATION.

Of the grace of God: The grace of God refers to the sum total of His Divine favors which are bounteously poured upon the undeserving sinner. In spite of man's inhumanity to man or man's turning from God, God, because of His love and the appeals of His Son, is lenient toward the one who has dishonored Him and turns from Him. This grace of God selected and qualified Paul for his task of apostle in spite of his unworthiness and prejudiced hostility to the interests of the early church.

The grace of God is always an undeserved favor; such as reconciliation with God or imputed righteousness. Paul is now digressing from the prayer which he originally had in mind and which he did not begin until the fourteenth verse. The thought of his Divine commission as apostle to the Gentiles was so overwhelming that he must explain it and reassure himself. "By whom we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith (Rom. 1:5)." "For I spake to the Gentiles, as I am an apostle of the Gentiles I magnify my office (Rom. 11:13)."

The life work of Paul would never have been undertaken with all of its hazards and dangers unless he were absolutely certain that a Divine voice had spoken to him; no mere imagination, growing conviction or personal leaning could have been responsible, nothing less than the direct command of God, "GO." "And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles (Acts 22:21)." "Delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me (Acts 26:17, 18)." It is no wonder that such tremendous worth attached itself to the efforts of Paul and that such inspiring results follow consecrated Christian workers. First, comes a Divine commission, a personal preference follows. Paul saw a world struggling in darkness, living in sin, doomed to eternal punishment. He knew there was a way out through

Christ. Many would never know this way if he did not tell them of it, or his followers failed to carry on the task which they had begun in their immediate community. So in feverish zeal, he preached and taught and prayed and wrote, losing no opportunities to use the gift which had been given to him. We need Pauls today.

HIS OFFICE A TRUST.

Which is given me: These words are very humbly spoken by one who considered himself less than the least. The marvel of apostolic election never left him. He might well have become self-satisfied or elated over his selection. As he neared the end of his life's journey and recalled the progress he had made, instead of taking pride over his part, his memory recalls in most humble terms his ambassadorship and ministry of the gospel; he cannot comprehend how God, Creator of the universe should have taken notice of him and directed the Holy Ghost to say (Acts 13:2), "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." He is amazed (Gal. 1:15, 16) that "God called me by his grace to reveal his Son in me that I might preach him to the heathen." Paul the servant, recognized the Divine commissioner who had assigned this responsibility to him, and, as a good laborer, he performs his duty. His experience on Mar's Hill (Acts 17:22-25) spurred him to new endeavor. How many were worshiping the unknown God! how many were failing to see in the Lord Jehovah the end of their search and the One who could satisfy their longing! As long as there was life, he would give his message and communicate with others.

FOR THE BENEFIT OF MANKIND.

To you-ward: Paul would have made an excellent teacher; pupils could not help but learn their lesson under his supervision. He believed in repetition of important truths; he constantly emphasizes and reaffirms that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs with the Jews; they are of the same body of Christ

and can share all the promises made in, by and through Christ.

Paul was never selfish in his religion; he did not absorb, as the sponge or blotting paper—to retain; he emptied himself in order to be refilled; he was a channel of blessing. Christians need to catch his spirit; the church is for ourselves but also for our neighbors.

This hope extended to the Gentiles was the beginning of modern missions; as the Gentiles found in Christ forgiveness of sins, favor with God, fellowship with the Son, power through the Holy Ghost, so all apart from Him can say, "He died for me; He rose for me; He ascended for me; every act of Christ was for me." Though the Messiah was a Jew, He was a Gentile Messiah as well as a Jewish Savior. Would that Jews, today, could see Him in His true light! How they have hardened their hearts and blinded their eyes to see nothing more than an ethical Christ! Jesus is the Jewish Messiah as well as the Gentile Savior.

III.

THE GREAT MYSTERY

"How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery (as I wrote before in few words)." —EPH. 3:3.

SUPERNATURAL IN ORIGIN.

How that by revelation: Revelation was not confined to Paul nor limited to the writers of the books of the Bible. We speak of their work as being given to them by revelation of God and of themselves as being inspired. But the revelation given exclusively to Paul was his commission to take the gospel to the world outside of Judaism. He wants it clearly understood that he did not receive this commission by his own choice or by man's allotment; he did not derive its necessity through any method of reasoning, independence of thinking or man's natural conclusion but it was given to him by the Lord Himself at the time of his conversion.

This revelation did not find him ready for his task any more than a child brought into the world is ready to assume the obligations of manhood. Years of preparation must precede the actual task. Paul (Gal. 1:17) refers to his special training in Arabia where he had gone to think things over, to bring himself in tune with the Infinite, to develop that technique of approach, mastery of speech and power to win others to himself and his Lord.

Whether he received his vision as Peter (Acts 10) or whether it came by the instantaneous and complete revelation (Gal. 1:11-18) "the gospel preached of me . . . I received . . . by revelation of Jesus Christ" we do not know, nor is it important that we should. It is sufficient to know that Paul's movements were directed by God towards Jerusalem. Galatians (2:2) states that his going to Jerusalem was Divinely ordained. On numerous occasions he writes

of having received visions and revelations of the Lord. "It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. . . . And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure (II Cor. 12:1, 7)." A thorn in his flesh was given to remind him that in spite of his contact with the Creator, he was still weak Saul; while he "preached Christ according to the revelations of the mystery (Rom. 16:25)," he was still human and susceptible to temptation. If the Divine commission was to be properly executed, he needed to be always on guard lest he be tempted to momentarily forget his calling as an apostle and the work which had been given him.

I do not for a moment think that God has ended His revelations. The Bible contains His revealed word necessary to save us, but His written word requires interpretation and application to a changing world. To whom will these revelations be given? Pray for strength and guidance to live up to what He already has given us, but also be expecting God's message. Who knows but what He may have some special message to be given the present generation through us?

If every teacher and preacher was as clear in their own mind of a God-given call as was Paul, how differently the history of the church would be written! "For I neither received it of men neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:12)." We cannot say God does not intend further revelation because we have not received them. Our sin may have closed the door. We need a receptive, prayerful, humble attitude. It is impossible to receive revelations unless we have prepared ourselves for God's message. We cannot erect a building until the foundation has been prepared; we cannot plant a field unless the soil has been plowed and harrowed; we cannot guarantee the parts of a machine until each has been tested, tried and found to be worthy of the strain which will be imposed upon it; neither can we receive God into the heart unless preparation has been given in advance. Finney who did such wonderful work in the Hudson River valley used to say that the

success of his work was in proportion to his approach to God—if there were any blanks in his ministry it was because his own personality excluded the personality of Christ. We need to pray continually that our eyes and the eyes of the world might see. The blind came to Christ. Gracious Lord, open Thou our eyes! We who are blinded by sin cannot see!

GOD'S PLAN IS BEING FOLLOWED.

He made known unto me: Whenever work needs to be done, in the fulness of time, God raises a man; He always has and He always will. We see sheep without a shepherd or pasture for this task. Perhaps He needs me. If I give Him time to speak, the Lord may say, "I need thee, follow Me." Some make their requests known unto God and are too hurried to wait for God's answer. His answer need not be given instantaneously. Preparation and cool reflection frequently precede God's answer. "And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles (Acts 22:17, 21)." "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints; To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col. 1:26, 27)."

We wonder sometimes why the rest of the apostles and disciples did not hear the call of Christ to preach to the Gentiles, and did not give a world-wide interpretation to His Sermon on the Mount. Were they too self-centered and therefore unfit to deliver this message? It never seemed to occur to the other apostles to recognize a Gentile—they would sooner have baptized a dog. It was an effort to say, "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." Paul seems to have been almost alone in his zeal. As Divinely inspired and exclusive holder of God's will for the Gentiles, he preached, baptized and established churches. "But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gen-

tiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake (Acts 9:15, 16)." "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood (Gal. 1:15, 16)." Peter gradually followed Paul; one by one the leaders of the church painfully came in line. Christ did not intend that anyone should be called clean or unclean, common or particular except as they had sinned. This is the essence of the early gospel and our gospel.

While Paul does not say it, yet it is implied that any revelations he received will be passed on to others. "But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee (Acts 26:16, 17)." First we come to Christ, then we go to our friends; first we face the Cross and then we face our tormentors; first the crown of thorns, then the crown of glory which never fades; first the despair of sin, then the joy of forgiveness.

As heirs of the Bible we have a duty to spread the gospel throughout all the world, to scatter colporteurs with their Bibles throughout the known world. "Freely ye have received freely give." We dare not ignore this great commission and fail to do our part. "Go ye and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost."

A LIVING SAVIOR.

The mystery: What is this mystery? Four mysteries are spoken of in the New Testament. Former generations had wondered concerning mysteries to be revealed but received no light. In Christ the secret is revealed. "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the

mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen (Rom. 16:25-27)." God planned to save the world; there was to be no longer a preferred sect, segregated class or favored few; all who accept Christ as their Savior, seeking pardon for their sins and promising with His help to lead a holy life will be given every assistance by the Divine Savior. Their past however black it might have been, their lives however steeped in sin, their talents however rusty with disuse, would not prevent Christ from accepting them and transforming them.

The Jews were not happy over the prospect; they did not want to be a part of that to which everyone else belonged; they wanted to be exclusively and privileged. A religious class consciousness had supported them throughout the ages but had not led them to follow the commands of God. Now Gentiles are recipients of God's grace, fellow-heirs with the Jews, of the same body of Christ and partakers of His promise. The middle wall of partition is broken down. Past prejudices and traditions must be abandoned to make way for the new church, the living body of Christ. The mystery of the church was thus no longer hidden. Any who came to Christ could be saved in this world and throughout all eternity. This is no secret today but this information was known by only a few in the days of Paul. Have we lost its thrilling purpose?

THE VALUE OF BREVITY.

As I wrote afore in few words: These words refer to Chap. 1:3-10 and Chap. 2:11-22, where Paul makes brief mention of the church which is the living body of Christ. Now, after having prepared the mind, he proceeds to explain more in detail concerning the meaning and function of the church.

Some see in these words a reference (1) to some previous letter now lost, (2) or an earlier letter known to his readers

or (3) an earlier statement in this letter. The substance of this writing might have been negligence on their part which required a reminder of their duty and their privilege, or reference to his apostolic authority to settle local disputes centering about discipleship. It is quite probable this was that sort of reminder that every parent gives to a child lest they forget a caution which has been expressed or a negative which has been given them.

Paul's words are brief and to the point. I think it was Spurgeon who said, "There is a difference between preaching an everlasting gospel and preaching it everlastingly." Paul was very much in harmony with that individual who said, "If you speak well you will not need to be long; if you speak ill, you ought not to be so."

IV.

THE MYSTERY OF THE CHURCH

"Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge of the mystery of Christ." —EPH. 3:4.

Whereby: Paul was logical in his thinking; his reasoning was well nigh faultless; he carefully builds his premises and follows step by step to a conclusion. Reference has just been made to his claim of apostleship and the reasons for it. The Ephesians recognized this authority and were grateful for God's recognition of the Gentiles. Paul makes their inclusion clear. He continues with his parenthesis; he has stated the familiar truth that as we are helped by others to the light, we must in turn help others to the light or we lose the light we have received.

THE MANNER OF OUR READING.

When ye read: How differently people read the Bible! Some are fascinated by it; others go to sleep over it; the majority are inspired by it. It is the same Book; the same Divinely inspired passages. How careful we should be in opening our Bibles, to study until we understand, and appreciate the message. The mere reading of a chapter can no more guarantee grace than eating of a loaf of bread can guarantee strength. The bread must be digested and assimilated. The Word of God must be understood and practiced. Paul prayed that his readers might catch his spirit. He wanted them to see what he saw; to empty their minds to all else but truth; to let everything else drop and be free to entertain God. A great many individuals and families are shipwrecked because of their failure to give religion a place in their lives. You can't confine your religion to church-going and expect smooth sailing in family life; a storm is

bound to come and it always leaves disaster in its wake. The Bible was given to us to check our daily conduct with God's plan for us. As the pilot of an ocean-going steamer takes his frequent, periodic, daily readings of the sun to check his course with his maps, so every day should have its time for study of the Bible, prayer, and checking of our course. When a letter comes from an absent member of the family, everything is laid aside while the letter is opened and read. The Bible is God's letter to us.

THE BIBLE CAN BE UNDERSTOOD.

Ye may understand: This does not mean we are to see everything clearly. The Jews are greatly confused. Man's mind is finite, God's is Infinite; but we can see enough to convince us that God is real; He knows what He is doing. If we allow Him to have His way, our interests will be advanced.

Many prophecies of the Bible are unfulfilled and mysterious. Daniel and Revelation will always be mysterious; where symbolism stops, reality begins. But our knowledge that prayer can be answered, sin forgiven and a second chance received, sends us on our way praising God and working out the salvation of our own soul, even though we see through a glass darkly.

The inscription on the Cross is an illustration of the pains that was taken that the will of God might be understood by all. Three languages appeared on the head of the Cross; Hebrew, the language of God's chosen people who gave to the world a revelation of God and for whom Matthew writes his gospel; Greek, the language of the literary and cultured for whom Luke writes his gospel—primarily for the Gentiles versed in the culture of the day; and Latin, the language of Rome with its far-reaching influence, world power and law for whom Mark writes his gospel. The three missionary journeys of Paul were planned with the purpose of extending a universal invitation to Jews and Gentiles. Peter, Paul, Barnabas, Silas and John Mark planned their entering wedges into heathendom to extend information concerning the plan of salvation.

Someone has correctly said, "A worldly spirit shuts out the Bible as effectively as a coin held in front of the eye closes the vision." The Bible is dull when we are dull. Hence the importance of using every means of grace, partaking of the sacraments, being regular in church attendance, faithfully reading the Word and being sincere in our prayers that the Spirit might never fail us. "The pure in heart shall see God." Charles G. Finney used repeatedly to say that whenever it seemed that a sermon was a blank in its influence, it was because he had not gotten very near to God. "Draw near to God and He will draw near unto you." Christ Himself said, "I will lead you into all truth." God intends His Book to be understood.

EXPERIENCE A TEACHER.

My knowledge: Knowledge is more than memorizing of facts; it implies an intelligent understanding of those facts. A pupil can memorize a formula, a scientist can safely apply that formula and use it for the benefit of mankind. Paul does not compliment himself upon his scholastic standing, though, undoubtedly, he would be a wearer of the Phi Beta Kappa key if he were alive today. He was sure of God and God made him sure of himself. Paul did not know everything about God but he knew that he knew God. We can be sure of God. It is possible to have an insight into God's plans for the ages. Paul was not making the mistake however of acquiring knowledge for knowledge's sake. Some have read the dictionary from beginning to end, in order to gain general knowledge; others read it to acquire information for immediate application. Paul was not interested in absorption apart from practical immediate liveability. In this epistle (Chap. 6:19), he prays that utterance may be given him to open his mouth boldly in making known the mystery of the gospel. He wanted to know God in order to know men and he wanted to know men in order that they might know God. First, we must know ourselves, understand our frailties as well as our points of strength, and be sure that it is impossible to live with our own strength. When we have come

to this conclusion, we are taking our first step in successful Christian living because we then place dependence upon God. When He becomes all things to us, progress begins. Let us pray for that knowledge of our selves and of God which will give us the assurance of our own salvation and give us no peace until we share this good news with others.

THE MYSTERY OF THE LIVING CHRIST.

In the mystery of Christ: Here the church and Christ are synonymous—Christ lives in the hearts of His believers; the church stands as a symbol of those who believe in Him and worship Him. This is the mystery which was not understood by the Jews and which the world cannot see. The church member is a minister of Christ and a steward of the mystery of God (I Cor. 4:1). The Holy Spirit leads us into all truth. An indwelling Christ helps us in all battles. We do not need to run to church or call the pastor to find Christ—though both methods may lead to this result. When we let Him into our hearts, He makes His own altar there. As we think our thoughts, Christ can share them. When we need Him, we need only commune with Him who lives within us. This thought was new to the world of Paul's day, so He shares His peace of mind and happiness with them. A mystery was not something unknown and incapable of being known but rather something which had not been known because God had not yet revealed it, but was now capable of being known by those who follow certain steps. What a pity the Jewish people of today are so far from understanding this mystery! Christ was a Jew, Paul was a Jew; both had the special favor of God as does every one who calls on the name of the Lord. God has hidden His treasure in His Word; He has buried it deeply like gold in deep veins of ore; we must seek in order to find and continue to seek in order to discover wealth; we must search as the prospector searches who finds in beds of mountain streams that which leads him to a mine. The mystery of Christ is hidden in the Word, revealed in history and human experience. Seek and ye shall find God and possess the unsearchable riches of God.

Christ lives! Scarcely a verse in this chapter does not contain His name. Ten times in these few verses, Paul repeats it. Christ is the object as well as the purpose of his search; Christ is the center and circumference of his life; everything that is worthwhile in Paul's life has come to him through Christ. He looks back upon his old life before the experience on the Damascus Road and the life since and he wouldn't exchange the latter for the first. That is the testimony of every sincere Christian. "Christ in you the hope of glory (Col. 1:22)." This Christ, however real, will never cease being a mysterious Presence.

The New Testament gives four mysteries which were hidden from the preceding ages. First, Christ incarnate in human flesh: "the mystery of godliness, of the God made manifest in the flesh, seen of angels and yet believed on in the world and received into eternal glory with the Father (I Tim. 3:16)"; second, the church, the living body of Christ explained in the third chapter of Ephesians; third, Christ living in the hearts of those who believe on Him (Col. 1:27), and fourth, the church as the Bride of Christ (Eph. 5:32).

THE CHURCH UNKNOWN IN OTHER AGES

"Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." —EPH. 3:5.

PROGRESSIVE REVELATION.

Which in other ages was not made known: By "ages are meant generations or periods of time between the creation of man and the giving of the gospel. God was continually revealing Himself but never as completely as in His Son Jesus Christ. Genesis tells of Christ. "Thou shalt bruise his heel (3:15)," and promises to the Gentile world a blessing through the Jews, "and in thee will all the families of the earth be blessed (12:3)." We might trace this revelation progressively throughout major and minor prophets, but the only point made here is that the Light was come into the world and the world knew Him not; that "in him was life; and the life was the light of men, and the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not (John 1:4, 5)."

God does not give the same amount or degree of light to all those who have faith in Him. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews is a great chronicle of faith and yet there is a vast difference between the faith of the heroes there narrated. Do we have more light than was given to any prior to, or following Christ? We ought to pray for more of the Father's blessing. The Holy Spirit is constantly revealing new truths which should cause us to worship God and give Him our life.

God gave the Israelites a tabernacle; He defended them against their enemies but He did not make known unto them His church or tell them how different they would be when Christ had lived His life as an example. The Old Testament prepared the way for New Testament revelation. Of Elisha it is said (II Kings 4:9), "he is a holy man of God." Second

Peter (1:21) informs us, "for the prophecies came not in olden times by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Paul gave the world that great secret that from all peoples throughout the world, a remnant would be taken whose faith in Christ and holy life made them a part of the living body of Christ. As Columbus discovered America which had been in existence since the founding of the world, so Paul discovered this previously unknown truth—that the church was Christ speaking to the world. Just why America should not have been known before 1492 we cannot say, except that in the fulness of time America *was* discovered; so, in the fulness of time, the church was discovered.

MANKIND IS INVITED TO ACCEPT CHRIST.

Unto the sons of men: This new church was to be neither Jewish nor Gentile. No group or nationality was to lord it over another. Christ is the Center and Head of the new organization (Acts 13:47). Paul was sent to be a light to the Gentiles that they should be saved unto the ends of the earth, not to boast in their new-found belief but to be a part of this new growing organism, the church. The Gentiles were to rejoice with the Jews (Rom. 15:8-11), all people were thus to gather around the Cross. This new institution was founded because of the difficulty of grafting into the old stock. Everyone knows the complication when a white man marries a yellow woman. The same problems would have existed in a Jew adapting his religion to the Gentiles and the Gentile adapting his for Judaism, so the church was created. Yet the Jews are still hoping they may be heirs of the promise and are still following with some modifications, their traditional religion. How differently would have been the record of their present if they had seen in Christ the fulfilment of their hopes! How much suffering would have been saved them and into what great heights of glory and service would they have gone! The same thing is equally true of ourselves. No one, today, has any excuse; the Bible has been sufficiently preached and is so easily ob-

tained that no one can offer any good reason why Christ is not a personal Savior. Let us all do our part to carry out the schedule which God has planned for those made in His image.

A little truth may be a dangerous thing; merely believing that there is a God without accepting Christ His only Son as our Redeemer may be as perilous as was the position of the thief on the cross who though near to Christ yet died in his sins. It is not enough for us to know that Christ can save. Has He saved me? Romans (8:25-33) tells us the Jews knew that the Gentiles would be included in the circle of God's favor, but they could not see the Gentiles of their day so included. Let us live our lives and work as though the world were coming to an end with the passing of this generation, and as though God's kingdom would not come upon earth unless our generation ushered its presence.

The Hebrews had light but not enough to work by. Dawn, while better than night, cannot be compared with, or completed without the light of day. The Sun of Righteousness has come. Let us walk in the light as He is in the light, and not grope or stumble in darkness intensified by our own shadows when we can be in the certain light of day.

THE LIGHT IS NOW SHINING.

As it is now revealed: Emphasis is to be put on the word "now." The Old and New Testament prophets and apostles had their revelations but now God has given an expressly full one. After the death of Christ, He showed Himself as He had not done for centuries. He wants men to be absolutely certain that there is but one God and that is our God; that the Jehovah of the Jews is not a myth but a reality; that this Jehovah has not become infirm as the ages pass but He has the strength of youth. We will never need to know more than He has already revealed through His teachers since Pentecost. God can reveal Himself fully but He chooses to communicate to a certain few mysteries of His plan. We would all like to know a great deal about

the time which must elapse between Christ's suffering and Second Coming. This is not necessary to our salvation. Let us be ready when He comes.

Naturally Paul was speaking a word for himself. Many had questioned his authority. He wanted the Galatians (1:12) to know that his commission had not been received from man nor had he been taught by men but by the Word of God. His first revelation had come to him through the Lord (Acts 26:16-18). This had been so real that he accepted it without question and began his mission. Later (Gal. 1:12) this was re-emphasized by a direct revelation from Jesus Christ. The earnestness with which we live sometimes proportionately depends upon the revelation we have had from God. If we believe that God has revealed Himself to us, habits and appetites vanish; we no longer have the struggle and conflict between the two natures in ourselves because the revelation of God absorbs all our energy and thought. The same thing is true with a young girl who has many friends among whom she divides her affections and attentions. When she finds the man she really loves, her affections are concentrated upon him and there is no longer a wavering mind or doubting heart. If God has revealed Himself to us there is no question about it; from then on, we live for Him. Some one, desiring to find out the true purpose of life, sent out a questionnaire. One hundred and twenty replies were received. Each one of them with a different purpose. If Paul had received one of these questionnaires, his answer would have been short and to the point—"For me to live is Christ."

LEADERS OF THE NEW ORDER.

Unto his holy apostles and prophets: Beyond question only the New Testament prophets and apostles are referred to here—those who were especially appointed to supervise the work of the early church and were being urged to magnify the office for which they had been set apart by special revelation. They were not Paul's apostles, but God's apostles. Their function was not to explain the teaching of Paul but

the will of God; they were holy because they had been set apart and dedicated to the service of God in whom they believed; they were holy as they lived near God, knew Him and ministered exclusively to Him. Their holiness made people believe in them and heed their advice. There was no limitation made as to who were to be prophets; Paul was a Jew but there were Gentile converts. The Holy Spirit came upon Christians without reference to their previous condition or servitude. We will recall that James insisted at the Jerusalem council that the Gentiles could be saved without conforming to the Mosaic ritual or following the rules for proselytes previously employed.

The twelve original apostles are named in Matt. 10:2-4. Eight apostles are recognized and spoken of in the church of the miracles:—Barnabas (Acts 14:4-14); Andronicus (Rom. 16:7); Junia (Rom. 16:7); Apollos (I Cor. 4:6, 9); Sosthenes (I Cor. 1:1, 4, 9); Paul (Gal. 1:1); Silas (I Thess. 1:1, 2, 4, 6); Timothy (I Thess. 1:1, 2, 4, 6).

The New Testament prophets were sincere men willing to be taught by, and directed by God. They were loyal to His truths. They could see the glory of the enlarged family of the household of faith; they saw beyond the suffering of martyrdom to the glory that was to be revealed; they had a leading part in the early church in encouraging the weak, stimulating the fearful and spreading the influence of the growing church. "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul (Acts 13:1)." "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues (I Cor. 12:8)." "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone (Eph. 2:20)." "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit (Eph. 3:5)." The Old Testament looked for salva-

tion and grace, the New Testament prophets "Look from the hilltops of Christ's suffering to the other hilltops of His glory."

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

By the Spirit: Paul was a Trinitarian. He never loses sight of the three Persons of the Trinity. Christianity would be lifeless without the Spirit. Every new convert was baptized to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The possession of the Holy Spirit was a condition of being true believers; the work of the Spirit was the power of the church; the light of the Spirit guided them to greater truths; success in the gospel ministry depended upon the presence of this Spirit. As it filled Cornelius so it must fill all who would come unto the Father. Remember John "was in the Spirit on the Lord's day (Rev. 1:10)," and hence received the marvelous closing book of the New Testament and the Bible.

Pentecost was a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies (Acts 2:16-22). The Spirit was poured out upon men. Joel spoke of that which was not experienced in his day; the Spirit was to be poured out upon not only Israel as a nation but also upon all people (Acts 3:18). "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord (Acts 3:19)." God is not dead; there is no reason why He has given His final word; there is every indication He will speak again. We must prepare ourselves by having His Spirit. As you look back can you honestly say you have His Spirit? Have you been near to the kingdom and have you felt He was about to reveal Himself? The council at Jerusalem prayed continually for the Spirit's guidance (Acts 15:28). For wise decision we must seek the guidance which comes from this Spirit of God.

VI.

THE CHURCH THE BODY OF CHRIST

“That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.”

—EPH. 3:6.

ALL NATIONS BLESSED.

That the Gentile: While the word “Gentiles” occurs here, “all nations” may be properly included. The Jew of both the Old Testament and New Testament divided all mankind into two divisions, the Jew and the Gentile. The Old Testament repeatedly states the Gentiles were to be blessed through the Jew and ultimately salvation was to be extended them. The New Testament confirms this statement (Rom. 9:25, 26; Rom. 10:19, 20). The prophecy was made that the “Gentiles would glorify God for His mercy and rejoice with his people (Rom. 15:9, 10; Gal. 3:8).”

It was God’s purpose to reveal Himself not only to His chosen people, but also to the rest of mankind after they had gone through generations of discipline and testing. We can well believe the Gentile would have been jealously watching God’s favor for the Jews and longed for a similar blessing. A great moment had now come. They were to sit in council with the Jews and have a part in the organization and work of the church. We of the Gentile faith have become so accustomed to our Bible and churches that it is difficult for us to think of ourselves as being without them. In counting our blessings, let us not forget the blessing which came to us largely through the ministry of Peter and Paul, and try to experience that same amazement, wonder and humble gratitude displayed by those who first accepted Christ as their Savior.

CO-HEIRS.

Should be fellowheirs: In this verse Paul again refers to the Trinity. Believers are fellow-heirs of God; they are the same body of Christ and they are fellow-partakers of His Spirit. Those who believe on Him become immediately sons of God. It is fact and not purpose. Gentiles, among whom are ourselves, are therefore children of God, brethren of Christ and equal in privilege with the Jews. No longer are there to be superior or inferior peoples, but all have an equal share, being heirs together of the unsearchable riches of Christ. We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:17); "If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise (Gal. 3:29)"; "Thou art no more a servant but a son and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ (Gal. 4:7)."

All that the Jews ever received in special privilege, in protection in time of danger, in loving communications from God and in revelation concerning the things which were to be, these we are to possess. A common father would distribute his vast estates among all his children. Each child becomes a fellow-heir not only in the earthly kingdom known to Abraham and the prophets but also of the heavenly kingdom revealed by Christ. Every one will be finally redeemed and glorified as all share the Covenant relationship and are children of God by faith in Christ. Paul spoke in the preceding chapter of believers as God's possession; he now speaks of them as fellow-heirs of God. They are to be (I Pet. 3:7) "heirs together of the grace of life" and (Heb. 11:9) "heirs of the same promise that was made to Isaac, Abraham and Jacob."

CO-MEMBERS.

And of the same body: The Greek words signifying this threefold privilege of the Gentiles as fellow-heirs, fellow-members and fellow-partakers could probably be best interpreted "co-heirs, co-members and co-partakers." This living body is privileged. Every believer is a living member of this living body. All members of the church of Christ must

have a unity of spirit, oneness and solidity. With the second birth comes new life and grafting on to the new body, all parts of which are fitly joined together. This incorporation settled a great many problems and did away with heated discussions and endless difficulties. The Gentile was not to be joined to the existing body of the Jews, nor were the Jews to affiliate themselves with the converted Gentile constituency. A new body, the church, was to be formed, the living Head of which is Christ. Christians are incorporated into that body as our hands or feet are attached to our body. The rite of baptism symbolizing the cleansing of sin and dominion of God's Spirit effects this union. This Spirit became the power within themselves and the power of the church. We are sometimes apt to forget that Christ intended there should be but one body and work to promote the interests of our denomination over those of the kingdom of God. Let us have the unity suggested here. Christ must be all and in all; nothing less. Various denominations, as members of the living body of Christ, must work together with that same spirit of co-operation that is exhibited in the relation of eye to ear and tongue to nostril or hand to foot. We are equally and jointly one in Christ.

CO-SHARERS.

And partakers: We, who have been made the children of God and have united ourselves to the body of Christ are to have an equal benefit in the gift of and use of the Holy Spirit, the Messianic promise to be shared by all. The Spirit of Pentecost was intended for all who follow Christ throughout the ages. This Spirit was the blessing which was to come upon all those who turned from sin; It was not the fulfilling of Jewish traditions or keeping the teachings of Christ which mattered so much as possessing the Spirit of God which was their staff, their guide and their all; it was this Spirit that caused "every man to look not on his own things but on the things of others"; it was this Spirit which gave the martyr

his ability to endure to the end; it was this Spirit which caused the runaway slave to return to his master; it was this Spirit which gave strength to endure rather than deny the Lord and it was this Spirit which would cause them to forget their imagined grievances and anything that separated them and to think wholly of that which had been in the mind of Christ; it was this Spirit which should also lead them to accept the great commission and go into the uttermost parts of the world to teach all men and baptize in the name of the Holy Spirit.

This co-operative blessing was not new to first century Christians. The prophets had anticipated the coming of Christ would remove barriers and others would share the privileges of the Jew. The Jew, to keep religiously pure, had always segregated himself for fear of pagan contamination. "And it came to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2, 3)."

One reads of this universal source of blessing in Jer. 3:17 and Zech. 8:22. This partaking was also proclaimed by Christ: "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd (John 10:16)." Paul announces the time is at hand, the promise has been fulfilled; the gift is yours; accept it and use it. The Jews, then as now, were unable to see or were stupidly unwilling to admit the truth that more than their nationality could share all God's blessings.

A CLAIM OF POSSESSION.

Of his promise in Christ: Christ, a Jew, fulfilled Messianic promises of salvation. The world needed saving; the sac-

ritual death of Christ opened the way for universal salvation of believers. The redemption which was promised first to Adam, then repeated by the Old Testament patriarchs was now a reality. God promised Abraham "in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." This prophecy can now be listed among those which have been fulfilled. Two promises are implied; (1) the redemption of mankind through one to be selected, and (2) the promise of His Spirit. Both have been fulfilled.

In Christ: These are the important words. Remove Christ and we have no sonship, no unity, no sharing; but in Him and with Him there is this vital union. In Christ we find this promised inheritance and this treasured wealth. Apart from Him there can neither be heirship, membership or participation. First comes union to Him. "I am the vine, ye are the branches." Christ's person and Christ's work are indispensable and fundamental.

THE MEDIUM OF POSSESSION.

By the gospel: If Christ is the One through whom we receive every good and perfect gift, the gospel is the channel through which this blessing flows, the vessel which contains it, or the means by which we receive it. "For in Jesus Christ have I begotten you through the gospel (I Cor. 4:15)." "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith (Rom. 10:8-15; 16:25, 26)." How many are blind to this promise of hope! The lost have no one to blame but themselves. Few in the civilized world have not heard the gospel. Few are ignorant of the fact that it offers them salvation and eternal life. They may not understand the relationship between the New and Old Testament; many mys-

teries may be secrets unrevealed, but the gospel extends to them sufficient promise and hope to arouse their interest, challenge research and give them no peace until they can say, "Jesus is my Lord." Let us never lose the wonder of the gospel which is the power of God unto salvation; the good news should stir ourselves and bestir others. How we praise Him because "he hath not dealt with us after our sins nor rewarded us according to our iniquities"!

VII.

GOD'S GIFT AN ACT OF GRACE

"Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power."
—EPH. 3:7.

GOD'S HELPERS.

Whereof I was made a minister: "Minister" has a far broader meaning than "pastor"; it carries a great shade of meaning in the New Testament. In Rom. (16:1) a function of a deaconess is suggested; in John (2:5, 9), a minister is one who takes the part of a servant; in Phil. (1:1), the minister is a deacon who relieves the wants of others. This same office is suggested in Col. (1:23) and II Cor. (3:6). A minister is a servant, worker or helper subordinate in all things to Christ. When the apostle remembers that he, a Jew, had been changed into a minister of Christ, he sees the gulf which lay between his former life and his present one; the old work and the new task, and feels unworthy to be called an apostle. He wants it understood (Gal. 1:12) that his office of an apostle was not received of men, neither was he taught by men; it was given to him by revelation of Christ in spite of his previous acts of persecution, he was honored by God and made a vessel fit for the Master's use. God is no respecter of persons. That which was written yesterday need not be continued into tomorrow. A unique change may take place within us, so complete, even our best friends may not know us nor members of the family recognize in us the old self. All things are possible with Him. Have I been made a servant of Christ, a sincere worker for Him, one of His dependable helpers?

THE GIFT OF GRACE.

According to the gift of the grace of God: The change in Paul came through the grace of God. Paul could do nothing

to produce this change, it was an act of grace. Paul's splendid education could not have produced his prison epistles. They were given to him by inspiration; God was talking to him. The message of Paul would have died shortly after his physical body had been laid away if it had not been for the eternal God who was speaking an eternal message through him. The power of preaching, of healing, of ministry is a gift of God's grace.

Paul was not conceited enough to admit that he deserved all he had earned. His life became an influence for God after he stopped working at cross purposes with God who had selected him to carry out His purpose. Paul's call to apostleship carried with it gifts appropriate to this commission and power and wisdom to properly use these gifts.

Each one differs in gifts assigned them; just what these are we do not always know; the least we can do is to pray that our gift may be known to ourselves or being known, then used to bring someone else to the Master. A certain story tells of a dispute which arose between an oak and a violet. The oak, because of its size and age, claimed superiority; the violet at its feet, minute, short-lived, but very fragrant, claimed both had been put in their place by God, so neither could boast over the other. "What does it matter? We are what God made us." How true of our diversity of gifts. We dare not boast but only pray for willingness to do what God intended we should do—glorify Him.

The particular gift mentioned here was not the gift of tongues, highly prized by the old church ministering to cities more cosmopolitan than cities of today; nor yet the gift of the Holy Spirit, one of the distinct marks of the believer; but the gift of apostleship which had been questioned by the eleven originally commissioned by Christ during His earthly ministry. This gift, was treasured by Paul who because of it, was enabled to be a greater power for good than would have been possible otherwise. Christ was revealed through him. Paul magnified his office. Can we do less?

A SACRED TRUST.

Given unto me: Christ was a Jew; Paul was a Jew. He had inherited the pride of his nationality, so took no credit to himself; his talents were inherited, his commission was received in spite of himself. In a most unlikely moment his spirit led him to go to Macedonia; he was under the constant suggestion of Divine guidance. While many of the details of his journeys were doubtless left to his own initiative or the counsels of his fellow-workers, the major responsibility rested with God. A great work was to be carried on; every man had his place in the far-flung battle-field; the Captain of our salvation knew the spot in which every man was to stand. God still has His work to be done; we all have our designated duties and responsibilities. The question as to when victory may come or how permanent may be the peace or when Christ shall arrive, depends upon the fidelity of His workers. Let us be found faithful. The gospel is a treasure committed to every Christian, not to be guarded or hidden, but displayed, applied and cherished. Never lose the sense of amazement over what God has placed in our hands.

A DIVINE GIFT.

By the effectual working: There is a great difference between the work of God and man. We are so easily discouraged, so uncertain in our plans; today there is vivacious enthusiasm, tomorrow listless despair; today an abundant energy, tomorrow a crushed spirit. Jesus would give us power and ability to carry out our wishes and be free from habits which enslave to destroy, sins which mar the happiness, beauty and stability of our homes, Jesus can uproot those vices which are occasion of stumbling. "Our vile bodies shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body (Phil. 3:21)." But Jesus is to do the fashioning and it is not done in the winking of an eye. As the sculptor adds a little here and removes a particle there, gradually working until the image is completed, so the Divine Workman carves our destiny, today adding a grace, tomorrow removing sin, but gradually

bringing about that perfection which is needed before we pass into His presence. Let us remember it is Christ which worketh in us. "Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily (Col. 1:29)."

If any change is to take place within us, God's hand must operate. Recall the picture in Acts, of Mark, the deserter—fearful of danger, unequal to his task, afraid of the future, and timid in face of public persecution—becoming transformed. In later years we see this man who turned back, sitting by the side of Paul in Rome, ministering to the needs of Peter and writing that wonderful gospel bearing his name, which must have been greatly used by the churches in Paul's day to bring blessing wherever it was read. God always works effectually.

A DIVINE POWER.

Of his power: "Dunimis" is the word used here; it is defined as an inherent power capable of reproducing itself in mighty works; it is the transforming power which changes us from a sinner into a saint and brings out in man the image of God; it is the effectual working of an evangelist. God's power was behind all Paul's apostolic activity. "It is not I that liveth, but God who liveth in me." This power does not always express itself in identical ways. "I labor yet not I but the grace of God which is with me (I Cor. 15:10)"; "Our sufficiency is of God (II Cor. 3:5)"; "I will glory in mine infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me (II Cor. 12:9,10)"; "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live (Gal. 2:20)"; "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me (Phil. 4:13)"; "Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power (Col. 1:11)." These verses outline definite results which can belong to any of us or all of us; they put into our hands the tool to execute our task and the power to fulfill our ministry. God gives us inward resources. First we have to bring our lives to God, acknowledge His sovereign right; believe the promises; admit the utter worthlessness of our own position and come, seeking to have His Spirit within us. As a tool in

the hands of a master yields itself to his direction, we must yield our lives to Him. His power will be recognized by the moral change produced in us.

It is impossible to live without Him; there is not a day that can be profitably spent apart from Him. To attempt to do so is as disastrous as for a lad in a rowboat, unacquainted with the perils of the sea or the length of the journey ahead of him or the currents which cross and recross, to pull out into the harbor toward the horizon and attempt to cross the Atlantic. So many problems and difficulties surround our task that we need the power of God to enable us to carry on with new confidence in us and toward us.

Henry Drummond calls love the greatest thing in the world: the love of God to man, of man to God and of man to his fellow-man. But whether it be this or something else, rest assured that this transforming power in the human heart is greater than any demonstration of physical power in the whole of God's created universe. Mighty as is the roar of thunder, the breaking of a storm, the crash of surf on a rockbound coast, the tumbling water of a cataract, the pull of gravity—the power of God which causes a sinner to turn from the error of his way is more of a miracle. Saul of Tarsus changed into Paul the apostle was more wonderful than the forming of a snowflake or the distilling of a drop of dew or the resources of a physical heaven or earth placed at our disposal. "If God be for us who can be against us?" When God gives us a task or a gift, He also gives us His power. Faint heart, take courage, and being thy labor.

VIII.

THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." —EPH. 3:8.

WONDER OF WONDERS!

Unto me: Repeatedly Paul expresses wonder over having been selected to carry the message of salvation to the Gentiles. The more he thought of his past and his personal qualifications, the more insignificant he seemed; he was to work for God, none less. The whole world was a field for his efforts; the power of God was to be demonstrated through him; souls were to be lost or saved as he proved faithful or false to his trust. The eternal salvation of a group supposedly outside the pale of privilege was committed to him. He must be a faithful steward as long as life and strength were given. The good news must be spread as far as possible. He was overwhelmingly conscious of this sacred opportunity and his own unworthiness. After every sermon and message he doubtless condemned himself and thought how poorly he had spoken, how much better he should have done and how many more ought to have been influenced to follow his Lord. Anyone faithful to his trust cannot help but wonder whether the lesson has been properly taught; whether if it had been presented from a different angle the results might have been more worthwhile; whether the proper amount of spiritual preparation had gone into its delivery or whether God had been given free opportunity to say what needed to be said. We are workers with Christ and it is possible through the ministry of His Spirit to restore men and women to a consciousness of their relationship with God. The wonder of it never ceases.

OUR COMPARATIVE STANDING.

Who am less than the least: Some translations use the past as well as the present tense; but not only was he less than the least, he still feels less than the least in spite of God's blessing upon his work. The Greek word is what is known as a "comparative superlative." It might be translated "lesser." In view of the mercy of Christ and His matchless glory, Paul was so small and insignificant, as to make a comparison really senseless. In First Timothy (1:13-16) Paul defines himself as chief of sinners, saved by Christ; others called him apostle. In ability and gifts he was equal to the most brilliant, but he knew himself. "I am the least of the apostles, not worthy to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church." His past sins are ever before him. He not only stood by and consented to the stoning of Stephen but he actively persecuted the early Christians. Many times, their expressions, their words, their appeals for pity, their sublime faith in God haunted him, and while he was not attempting to accumulate merit for himself by later acts of piety, he doubtless frequently prayed, "Lord, forgive me." He sought to atone for his past omissions. When light came to a soul which had found Christ, a little of the agony of his soul was erased.

When Martin Luther was asked the various steps in religion, he replied, "The first is humility; the second is humility, and the third is humility." "The day of conviction is a day of self-annihilation." The great heroes of faith have all possessed this humility; they have said, in other words, they were less than the least. "Who would be chief—be humble." Abraham says, "I am but dust and ashes"; Jacob cries out, "I am not worthy of the least of thy mercies"; Job tells his friends, "I am vile"; Isaiah lament is, "Woe is me for I am a man of unclean lips"; Peter cries out in anguish, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord"; John felt unworthy to undo the shoe-latchet of Christ. Every sincere Christian has the same feeling when he thinks of what God has lovingly and perfectly done, and his own tardy and imperfect response to this Divine love.

This was not an inferiority complex of Paul; there were times when he was very conscious of his position and never yielded to others in respect to it. "I labored more abundantly than they all (I Cor. 15:10)." When occasion demanded it, he stood for his rights but when he was thinking of the instrument God was using, when He might have found so many others, he became humble. He seemed to have a wistful regret that he had not been the first disciple of Christ and the first one to recognize Him as Savior of the world. So many others had preceded him in this recognition. Then, too, he was humbled by the obstacles he faced, the perils of his journeys, the hardship of preaching, the persecution of his opponents; he felt all were deserved. Perhaps he might have escaped some of them if he had been more teachable, more loving or more Christ-like. His humility was that of the violet, the humblest and yet most fragrant of flowers; his song was that of the lark, the sweetest of feathered singers, who soars the highest in the heavens, and yet builds its nest on the ground. He gloried to share the suffering of Christ.

TRUE BELIEVERS.

Of all saints: Here is an apparent contradiction—claiming to be a saint and yet one of the least of the followers of Christ. The saint was not sinless, nor yet a martyr, but one whose every intent and purpose was to live for Christ; saints endeavored to follow Him every step of the way; they zealously sought to live holy lives. Saints were therefore not limited to the apostles, prophets or teachers; any believing man, woman or child might be a saint. "Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem (Acts 9:13)." Ananias refers to members of the church at Jerusalem, not necessarily those who had been persecuted but those who had kept their faith. Even saints are humble, for they, with the sinner, are far removed from the goal of perfection and command of Christ, "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect." There can be an upright carriage and yet a lowly spirit. What a contrast there was

between Saul of the Old Testament and the Saul of the New. In the former we have the pride of aristocratic forbears but dismal failure; in the latter a pride of Divine sonship, imprisonment, but a name blessed by all posterity. Conscious of his high calling in Christ Jesus, feeling unworthy, and yet never stopping for a moment to ask Divine blessing on the task of the moment. This was the spirit of one who counted himself "less than the least." There was no spiritual pride here. Is there in us? Someone when asked how one can cultivate the spirit of humility gave four means: First, remember former iniquity; second, remember the fulness of God's mercy; third, keep ever before us the purity of the living God, and fourth, look always to Him for the development of this virtue within ourselves.

GOD, THE AUTHOR OF GIFTS.

Is this grace given: Grace is unearned bounty. Both past and present tense are found in translations. When God begins to give, He does not give once for all but He keeps on giving. Christ made His sacrifice once for all, but Christ keeps enriching us with His grace. A loaf of bread may satisfy hunger for today but what of tomorrow? God provides for our daily wants; He never leaves us until these are met. As the Father gave to His only Son, so He gives to those who follow in His steps. We do not earn this grace with which we are favored, but He gives it to us without restriction. "If any man will do his will he shall know the doctrine (John 7:17)." The doctrine is the grace of God toward sinners who have disregarded His gifts, broken His laws and turned from Him. This grace expresses itself in our meditation upon His holiness, appropriating His Divine mercy and verbal and living gratitude to the Giver of every good and perfect gift. It is interesting to trace this word "grace" and by its various uses arrive at its definition—"the grace of Jesus abundant to me-ward"; "we are heralds of grace"; "by grace we have our conviction in this world"; "by grace I laboured more abundantly than they all." By grace God calls us and by grace He accepts us for His service and by grace He furnishes us for every good work.

A DIVINE COMMISSION.

That I should preach: This word "preach" presents a challenge; it is a call for self-expression. What shall I preach? Sometimes we wonder when listening to the modern pulpit whether or not preachers have heard this call. Paul preached Christ and Him crucified. He found this task so absorbing that he had no opportunity, if he had been so inclined, to preach politics, art, astronomy, social science or current events. He had a story to tell—God would pardon all who came seeking forgiveness for their sin—Christ was the perfect example and to Him all might look and find pardon for their conduct—Christ made a sacrifice on the Cross once and for all—Jesus became the power of God unto salvation to each one who believes. There was only one thing left to do and that was to call on men everywhere to repent and accept this gift of God. What better theme could there be for a sermon? Who can ever exhaust its message as long as there are those who have not heard, or having heard, have turned a deaf ear to its appeal? Can we do better, today? Who will preach this message, today?

To Paul, this theme never became threadbare or worn; the message never lost its appeal. The temporary sufferings of Christ and His eternal glorification were of interest to those who were suffering during their earthly life and wanted the assurance of relief and glory after death. Who does not envy the butterfly emerging from its cocoon and wish that they might be equally transformed someday, somewhere? "Beautiful Isle of Somewhere." So Paul gets enthusiastic as he tells them their hopes can be realized in Christ, his heart takes fire as he tells them He is the answer for every need; no life need be lived in despair, despondency and drudgery. They have pardon though condemned by their acts; they have freedom though a slave to evil habits; they have eternal life, though they die in their bodies. An indwelling Christ removes this doubting fear which deadens, burdens, weakens and excludes peace, happiness and satisfaction. Paul as ambassador of the King of kings announces the joyful message of victory over self; pardon in Christ

resurrects from the grave; a heavenly land beyond and riches which can never be measured or exhausted. As envoy he extends the invitation everywhere—"This is for you; accept it; it is for you now, enjoy it." Is it any wonder that to him, preaching was no irksome, monotonous task? He desires nothing more than to spend and be spent in this glorious occupation. First, Paul appropriates Christ, then he divides his inheritance and keeps it.

THE AUDIENCE.

Among the Gentiles: Paul had an unlimited audience. His message of personal salvation was of universal interest. Very few relished the task of preaching to the Gentiles. The apostles preferred to talk to their own people, the Jews. In a way they could not be blamed for this attitude. The trail had not been blazed. Christ pointed the way when He spoke to the woman of Samaria, "The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father. . . . true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth (John 4:21, 23)." With this prospect of a universal gospel it would be manifestly impossible for all the world to go to Jerusalem three times a year to worship God. Judaism had its limits. Christianity could not be confined to any locality. Jewish prejudices and bigotry were to melt away. The Temple at Jerusalem was no longer adequate. Paul saw this vision. He had seen the great temple of Diana at Ephesus and the shrine of Jupiter at Lystra and pitied the disappointed devotees from the four corners of the known world who gathered at these shrines for blessing—what chaff for bread! Many go to Rome, to-day, for special blessing or journey to Mecca. We need not equip an expedition to find Christ—He is everywhere. He can be worshiped in a temple, on the high seas, in the silent depths of a canyon, on the far stretches of a prairie or in the dense thicket of a tropical jungle. Any seeking soul may find Him near, and worship in sincerity and in truth.

Peter and the apostles might have felt they were being shelved when assigned to the Gentile field. When a group

of early apostles gathered together to discuss their future, those who stayed at Jerusalem undoubtedly felt very much like young theological students who go as assistants to prominent pastors or who are fortunate to be called to strong churches. They are thankful not to have been assigned to some mission field or some weak insignificant church. Frequently among Christian workers there is a feeling that unless the address of the worker is well known and at the cross-roads of the world, success is far distant or never to be achieved. Here was a man who could see in a difficult field and a despised people who knew not God, a great task which he would not yield to anyone. While in Asia Minor he did not have longing eyes toward Jerusalem, he was satisfied in being where God had sent him.

THE WEALTH OF THE GOSPEL.

The unsearchable riches of Christ: Unsearchable riches! what do they imply? Originally "unsearchable" meant "not to be tracked by footsteps." It meant something which could not be traced. "How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out (Rom. 11:33)." "He doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things and without number (Job 5:9)"; "Who doeth great things past finding out (Job 9:10)"; "He breaketh in pieces mighty men in the ways past finding out (Job 34:24)."

The riches of Christ are unsearchable in that they are beyond possibility of exhaustion. We can never reach their limit. Here is a mine with an endless vein; here is treasure which can never be spent. There are no words in the human tongue capable of describing this wealth. Christ's riches are so excellent, so full, so various, so grand, so abundant, so permanent that they supply every need of every individual for all time.

There are many ways in which we might attempt to classify or enumerate the riches of Christ. It is doubtful whether any two people would agree as to what Christ has meant to them, or the value they have found in Him. Well we do exclaim, "What is man that thou art mindful of him?"

We might speak of the unsearchable riches of God's love. He died in order that we might live, His blood cleanses us from all sin. A story is told of an innocent father who gave his life on the guillotine to save his only son from death. This was a sacrifice of a father for his only son. Christ died for humanity.

We might speak of the unsearchable riches of Christ's pardon. All may come; no one is too vile to be made clean. We frequently forget all things are possible with God; that no heart can be beyond the power of Christ's cleansing blood. A fable tells us the Augean stables were cleansed by turning a river through them. But think of cleansing civilization, of dying once on the Cross in order that the pollution of centuries might be removed!

We might speak of the unsearchable riches of God's covenant, through Christ, for those who mourn. The tears of the ages are wiped away, the sorrow of centuries are softened as the world turns to the Empty Tomb and finds here an assurance of their own immortality and permanent abode in heaven.

We can speak of the unsearchable riches of Divine wisdom which teaches us all we need to know about life and about ourselves, the world in which we live and the world to which we go. History tells us those who had difficulties said, "Come, let us go to Aristotle and he will help us out." How little he could do! How much Christ can do! If Pilate had only been willing to accept Him; or Nero! If rulers of today would only seek His wisdom, what might happen!

We can speak of the unsearchable riches of happiness and joy which is ours because He leads us into green pastures and beside the still waters.

To think of Christ's value we must think of the influence of the sun. Nothing lives apart from the sun; every blade of grass in the world, every flower that blossoms, the leaf of every tree on every continent throughout all ages has grown and is growing because the sun has shown. So all riches of the human heart are ours because of Christ. Take His love, which leads us to love our enemies; His sympathy, which gives our touch the needed comfort; His strength, en-

abling us to do our duty; His pardon, inspiring us to say, "Forgive them for they know not what they do"; His holiness, which draws us away from the world to lives of holiness; His stability, inspiring us to stand and having done all, to stand. We are willing to overlook; we stand by, for better or for worse, until death do us part, because He has stood by us, and we must stand by those to whom our vow has been made. We think of His grace and graciousness, and seek by our words and actions to imitate Him.

We think of His compassion and become tenderhearted, and yield our sympathy to those who seek it. We think of His peace, and determine that we shall not live in unrest, turmoil and wrangling. We think of the fulness of His promise; it is our hope and to it we aspire; it is the beacon which guides us through darkness into light. We think of the riches of His reward; none can steal our portion, it is ours for ever and ever. It is the riches of this Christ that we should preach and teach and live. How unsearchable are these riches and the ways of God past finding out!

IX.

THE DUTY OF THE CHURCH

"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."

—EPH. 3:9.

OUR TASK.

And to make all men see: Paul was very clear concerning his life-work. No question arose as to the task given him by God. He humbly accepted the responsibility and faithfully discharged his sacred trust. The grace of God was given him in order to preach the unrestricted, unsearchable riches of Christ to the Gentile, and invite all men to join the vast brotherhood of the body of believers. Never had such an opportunity been given. The prospect was so wonderful as to cause many to doubt the reality of such a gospel for themselves. To Paul fell the double task of first preaching the gospel and then convincing those who heard it, to appropriate it to their needs.

The word "see" is important. Its true meaning is to bring light to bear upon that which has been in darkness; to let the sun shine where it was impossible to see without it; to pour a flood of spiritual light upon problems. Those who do not accept Christ are living in doubt, darkness and despair. Not until the Sun of Righteousness has risen within them are they able to see the reason for their being, the Divine purpose of God, and the glory which shall be revealed in them. Are we living in darkness or light?

Paul knew God's power was able to change man's life. No sinner was so deep in his sin but what our Lord could lift him from his despair. Paul never whitewashed sin. A sinner is separated from God. Jehovah, as Heavenly Father, reveals His word in His Holy Book to stimulate sinners to

seek grace and be converted. David discovered (Psa. 18: 28) that "the Lord will enlighten my darkness." God is not dead that He should not speak any more. He plays to no favorite son. His message is to reach every man, woman, and child. Some medicines apply only to children, others to adults; the gospel is for all. A naturalist tells us that if a wasp discovers a single bit of honey, he will immediately return to his home, tell the good news to his fellows and, in a few moments, will return with great numbers to share the discovery. This should be characteristic of the Christian who discovers new truth. He does not selfishly feast upon it, but finds his delight in sharing his knowledge with others.

We find in these words a suggestion of Christ's commission to go out into the highways and byways and compel them to come in. Just what does the word "compel" involve? Potential personal workers and active Christians hesitate to literally interpret this command. We do not want to be too bold, self-assertive or aggressive. Opposition is certain. The way of the sincere believer is no bed of roses. Few want to be told the error of their ways; it is painful to be torn away from boon companions; habits are not easily broken. A drastic change of life is more feared than a major operation, for spiritual anæsthetics are not employed. We must make men see the value of giving up much that seems vital. We must face hardships, opposition and repeated repulsion. Paul and those who would follow him must press on to carry the gospel to the uttermost corners of the world. We are spiritual oculists to give eyesight to the heart.

A VAST BROTHERHOOD.

What is the fellowship: Unfortunately words, sentences and phrases are not emphasized in the printed text. If this sentence were printed to bring out the emotions of the writer, those words would be made to express amazement and surprise. The church is to be a vast fellowship; not a group of worshipers with faces turned toward God, but unconscious of the presence of one another. Cordial relationships with

each other accompany our worship of God and prove the sincerity of our worship. It would be unnecessary to go outside the church to find a spirit of brotherhood. The spirit of comradeship found in the circle of the twelve apostles should be discovered in every congregation. We stand together to fight the good fight of faith. We unite our testimony to let our light shine before men. We must have fellowship. Nothing must ever mar or minimize it. No formalities bind us; we are either bound by the cord of Christ's sacrifices and God's love or we are separated.

What makes a spirit of fellowship? A common experience contributes to it. Patients in a hospital ward become rapidly acquainted as they relate past and present experiences. Soldiers learn it as they stand shoulder to shoulder in the trenches. Sinners whose habits have been broken, whose stormy lives have found calm, who have obtained mastery over temptation through victory in Christ, feel like comrades. They love to tell and retell what Christ has done for them. They find pleasure in sharing descriptions of transformations effected within them and in this spirit plan the extension of God's kingdom.

The church calls for a renewal of the covenant which bound disciples of our Lord together in this fellowship. Sometimes we create orders and brotherhoods, and even try to legislate a spirit of brotherhood. Ritual symbolizes a condition of the heart. There is only one place to find fellowship and that is at the Cross or in the upper room or about the Communion table. This becomes the stock from which grafts can be cut into constitutions, by-laws, organizations or programs. First, let Christ have complete possession of us. Be washed in the blood of the Lamb, then become fishers of men, and you will be blessed by the spirit of fellowship. "Blest be the tie that binds our hearts in kindred love."

ONE BODY.

Of the mystery: Paul was a very humble man and yet there were times when he was very proud of his mission. The function of the church has been withheld from God's

people for countless ages. Christ referred to it but it was for Paul to reveal it and start a superstructure which would endure until Christ comes again. This mystery to which he refers so repeatedly with a purpose to explain it, was that Christ came to save the world. The gospel was to have a universal application. Christianity was not a closed corporation. Christians could invite anyone to accept Jesus' invitation. No corner of the world was to be excluded from God's great mercy. The church was Christ's living body.

Mission boards function to preach the gospel to each generation throughout the world. If any generation fails in this sacred task, souls will be lost forever. The missionary zealously extends frontiers and widens the influence of Christ through the world. Do we catch the thrill of being possessors of this mystery hidden for so many ages? Do we seek to enlarge the body of Christ and strengthen the church with our support and effort? "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began. But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith; To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen. (Rom. 16:25-27)." "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church. Wherefore I am made a minister according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God. Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints; To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you the hope of glory (Col. 1:24-27)."

Do we understand this mystery? And are we leaving no stone unturned to explain it?

GOD'S PROVIDENCE.

Which from the beginning of the world: Those who doubt the existence of God have not examined history or the world. History proves conclusively that man does not rule. Enterprises rise to fall, man triumphs to be crushed by death. This great universe is being guided by a will other than our own. God knew before He created the world why He created it. It is not considered good business to erect a skyscraper until leases have been signed for a major portion of the proposed building. An architect plans for the special requirements of those who are to occupy space in the new building. The Divine Architect did not create this marvelous world without knowing all about it before He made it. He did not form man from the dust of the earth on the spur of the moment. He did not send Christ to die for the sins of man because of momentary pity. From the very beginning of the world, every detail had been in His mind. During various ages and periods of time, the Creator has been gradually preparing man to receive this message of redemption, "Christ in you the hope of glory."

GOD'S REVELATION.

Hath been hid in God (omniscient and source of all blessing): Sometimes we rebel against our ignorance. We want to know more of the mysteries of life. Adam and Eve had this same feeling and it was to this Satan appeared when he tempted them in the garden. God has given us a great deal more knowledge than He gave Adam and Eve, Abraham, David, Solomon, Isaiah or John the Baptist. His plan to have the church the living body of Christ was hidden until after Christ had come to the world. He still hides a great deal from us. "Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow (I Pet. 1:11)." "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force (Matt. 11:12)." "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the

hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory (I Cor. 2:7)."

We hesitate to think what would happen if God gave man more knowledge than he now possesses. Would this knowledge lead him to Christ? How many take all that God gives, without recognizing Him as the Giver of every good and perfect gift? They use their reason and talents and take possession of God-created natural resources without thanking the Giver, recognizing His bounty or drawing any closer to the heart of God because of their possessions. God has given man sufficient knowledge to lead his salvation, to assure him that heaven was made for him, and to convince him that God forgets in forgiving. This is enough. Let us not grow sour or despondent because of our inability to comprehend the Infinite God or His ways. Seek and ye shall find enough light for the next step. Close our Bibles, turn from God and we are adrift in the world, Christless, Godless and Spiritless. This is spiritual suicide. We turn on our radios without being able to build, repair or understand it. Let us use God without knowing all that has been hidden in Him.

CHRIST AN INSTRUMENT OF GOOD.

Who created all things by Jesus Christ: Paul undoubtedly refers to God as the Creator of the physical world and Sponsor of Christ, Savior of the world. The Bible frequently brings creation and redemption close together. In marveling at God's creation, we are not to forget our redemption; in thanking Him for His redemptive work, we must not forget His creation. A story is told of a boat-trip taken by Napoleon and his officers across the Mediterranean. The officers were discussing the question, "Is there a God?" and, in their flippant way, had about come to the conclusion that there was none. Napoleon passing by and hearing, pointed to the stars with this simple comment, "Gentlemen, who made all that?" No serious thinker can escape the reality of God. The heavens and the earth reveal Him; the spiritual and the physical world are dependent upon Him.

He gave life and constantly adapts that life to the purpose for which it was created.

In Genesis we find, "In the beginning God." How satisfying! The first word we want to greet us as we open God's Book is this, "In the beginning God." Those who rearrange the Bible chronologically, or exclude a great deal of it in an effort to adapt it to the rush of modern life, are committing a grave error. The rising generation has to go on a treasure-hunt to find what the King James Version places in our hands. It is so easy to miss the trail and the treasure. These make it difficult to find God as the Creator of all things. He made us, and having made us, does not leave us to our own fate and destiny. He is like an artist who takes clay, forms beautiful vessels for his amusement and soon tiring of them, breaks them or leaves them for other fields of effort; but we are made vessels fit for the Master's use. Every soul has its place in this puzzling universe. God knows where each soul belongs. Why not let Him place us where He wills?

The power of God is demonstrated and explained through His Son, Jesus. The church finds its inspiration in Christ. Christ suffered in order to finish the work which had been begun. Paul sees a church in the making. The Lord's hand is guiding Paul's life and in turn Paul is directing others.

Another thought lingers here. Jesus Christ is the unifying Personality, uniting all people and preventing their differences of opinion from separating them into wide groups. Individuals, families and communities possess a common tendency to separate. Christ through love draws them together.

For Christ, in the name of Christ, and with the help of Christ, let us lay aside that which separates and for His sake overlook, forgive and seek to maintain that fellowship, which we believe He wishes continued.

X.

THE WISDOM OF GOD MADE KNOWN

"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." —EPH. 3:10.

THE FULNESS OF TIME IS HERE.

To the intent that now: God's perfected plan constantly unfolds; much has been revealed, much is hidden. Paul's day was given a revelation different from that which is being received by us. God waits for the fulness of time. The future holds much to be revealed.

In the past, God progressively made His will known as mankind was able to understand it. The gospel age has come. The truth now given to Paul is a challenge for greater fidelity. God reveals what He has done for fallen man and prepared for redeemed men. Believers in Christ are to save their own souls and be witnesses for Christ in all the world. But their influence extends both outward and upward. We now see the grandness of God's dispensation of grace.

THE GREATNESS OF PAUL'S COMMISSION.

Unto the principalities and powers: As an apostle to the Gentiles, Paul had an outstanding task. It was his duty to give the good news of salvation and to train associates to spread and multiply his message. To humble Paul who called himself less than the least, was given the secret that God has a plan not only for sinful earth but also for heavenly hosts. Daniel (10:10-21) refers to angels. There are good angels and bad angels but only the good angels are referred to in this passage—angels who look down upon earth with more than a curious gaze. According to I Pet. 1:12, the

blessing which God extends to the church causes angels to covet the privilege of mortals. "These things angels covet to look into." Angels are in the presence of God but their knowledge is incomplete until they observe through the transforming power of God's Spirit in the lives of sinners that manifold wisdom which causes them to praise God Who controls them. Their position is not unlike that of a child who loves the father but cannot properly respect the father until it is grown to maturity and passed through the problems and responsibilities of parenthood. There is no sin in heaven; on earth a constant battle is waged between good and evil. Angels are interested spectators; they encamp around them that fear the Lord; they want to see how Christians use the spiritual weapons which have been placed in their hands. Every time we triumph over temptation, good angels praise God; evil angels and demoniacal powers are dismayed.

We are told that there are many things which are unknown to the angels. The Second Coming of Christ is one of them. They must have been considerably mystified when Christ was born in a manger. The unfolding of His brief earthly existence was a constant wonder to them. As they see the conflict between the followers of Satan and Christ, and watch the church vanquish its foes, they catch the thrill of the conflict, give encouragement and receive finishing touches on their education. The angels are instructed by God's mercy to sinful men. They see God in the beauty of His holiness. How strengthening to know we do not fight our battles alone but have angels as quiet and interested observers. As some one has very aptly put it, "the elder sons of God in heaven, are taught by the junior sons of God on earth."

ANGELS ARE SCHOOLED ON EARTH.

In heavenly places: The redemption of humanity is a great problem. This conflict beginning with Adam will not end before the Second Coming of Christ. The church is God's army being watched by angels who are unable to fathom

God's wish for us; the church is a class room in which angels learn their lessons. How grand is God's plan of grace embodying heaven and earth!

The angels are spoken of as fellow-servants of God (Rev. 19:10). They possess a superior intelligence, but they are unable to fathom God's purpose. Though they live with Him, they need to see our transformed lives, grace removing sin, God carrying out His will through our struggles. The hosts of heaven look upon earth's bitter struggle and see in the growth of the church God's grace working in the hearts of men. They know Satan's power will be eventually broken forever. We ought to be serious knowing our work effects men and angels. As the church grows and expands and catches the spirit of the early church, heaven will glory in God's eternal purpose. "The church above is organized, the church below is organizing."

FUTURE REVELATIONS.

Might be known: Some day all of God's plan will be known. Angels need revelations of God's plan of redemption, as exhibited in God's dealings with His church. Much of God's wisdom is like a mountain hidden in the clouds or covered with mist; gradually the clouds grow thinner and more and more the outlines of the peaks become visible. Some day, the skies will be cleared and everything shall be revealed. The veil will be lifted and we shall know all. It is said the top of Mount Ararat has never yet been seen; a pinkish haze hangs over its summit. So the whole purpose of God is never completely understood. Some day we are promised "there is nothing covered which shall not be made known." Paul feels that a great revelation is about to be known. In each of the preceding chapters reference was made to the revealing of God's purpose (1:9-12; 2:7; 3:10, 11). When Christ comes to earth again more will be known. When the new heavens and new earth are formed, all will be known for then we shall know even as we are known.

The Christian must never lose his conviction that God will eventually make all things known. No one else can

give this information. Man cannot discover it for himself, science does not reveal it; we must wait for God's good time.

GOD'S SAVING POWER DEMONSTRATED BY THE CHURCH.

By the church: Any number of means might have been selected to convey God's plan. At times, dumb beasts have spoken, angels have delivered a message, dreams and visions were employed. God manifested Himself in various forms on more than one occasion. Just now the church is His mouthpiece. The story of the church is a history of God dealing with the redeemed. The record of her formation, her development and growth, the battles of her leaders, the hopes, the fears, sorrows joys and toils of her members, all these carry messages of God to angelic hosts. So through all time God reveals His Divine wisdom. Not until the church is completed will the next glorious age appear. The church on earth is a proof of God's power to save from sin. It is an evidence of what the second chance can mean to those who make mistakes.

The church is well characterized in 1 Peter 4:10, as the steward of the manifold wisdom of God. Her task is described in First Corinthians: "We are made a spectacle unto the world and to angels and to men (4:9)." The church becomes the theater upon whose stage is displayed God dealing with those made in His own image. We wonder whether the church realizes this secret calling and its function. If so, is it giving its message? It certainly will point men constantly to heaven and never relax in vigilance. As long as any are in trouble, the church will be near to help in the name of Christ. The church exists to demonstrate Christ's power to save from sin. The church is an object lesson of what love can do when sin abounds; the power of the church is the Holy Spirit moving through its members to the glory of God. No wonder the angels look down from the battlements of heaven.

GOD'S WISDOM PERFECT IN ITS VARIETY.

The manifold wisdom of God: The word "manifold" suggests a great variety. God did not create His creatures as

a brick manufacturer presses bricks; no two faces are alike. Each individual requires separate treatment, yet God knows our needs and stands ready to grant us His power to meet our requirements. He is never at a loss to carry out His purposes.

From his prison, Paul could see the motley throng which paraded the streets of Rome; every nationality of the known world was represented there; the devotees of many forms of religious belief passed beneath the grated bars of his window. He yearned for the opportunity to show each one of them that Christ was the answer to his need.

This presents a beautiful picture of Paul. As a tapestry is made up of many harmonious colors carefully blended by many patterns, so the church with the various temperaments of its members and various expressions of God's saving power, presents a beautiful picture of His saving grace. The church is like a gorgeous garden crowded with various colored flowers of every hue and description. The nations of the world with their diverse national characteristics present a beautiful picture of God's power to save to the uttermost all who come unto Him.

Paul must have unconsciously contrasted the power of Rome with the power of God. The world had never been so unified; an iron heel stamped out rebellion; liberal rewards produced loyalty of a character. All roads on land and sea led to Rome, yet their successes could be but for a moment; their power lay in the strength of their armies; Christ's power was the power of love; Jesus altered hearts and cleansed them of all impurities. Only so could nature be reborn and turn from the evil which was a former source of pleasure. Rome compelled obedience, while in the heart, hatred burned. Christ in His manifold wisdom obtained loving obedience and sacrificing devotion from His followers. Love is mightier than the sword. Christ's peace abides in the heart; it cannot be legislated by treaty or decree.

God was using the church made up of every element in human society to demonstrate to the angels His power on earth and in heaven. Every soul was under His watchful eye. Not a sparrow fell without His knowledge. It is as

though God were more anxious of the welfare of a single prodigal son than He was of the catalysm which might result in the universe if a single star was disturbed from its course or a planet deviated from its appointed path.

As God's wisdom was so vari-colored and beautiful, ours ought to be likewise. The cleansing of the human heart takes away darkness and brings cleanliness and whiteness. White is not an absence of color but the combination of all colors and their complete absorption in each other. Holiness thus becomes not a single virtue but the much prized gift of God which necessitates all virtues. Let us be careful lest we be satisfied with possessing honesty and neglect holiness, long-suffering, peace, loyalty, security and sister virtues. We are to demonstrate the manifold wisdom of God in our work, acts and character.

The manifold wisdom of God is seen in the union and march of history. Nations rise into power to fall; the church goes marching on. Satan attracts men at every point but Christ's atoning work is stronger. The contingency has not arisen which He cannot meet.

XI.

THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

"According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." —EPH. 3:11.

A DIVINE PLAN.

According to the eternal purpose: It was God's purpose to bring all things under the head of Christ, the Redeemer of the world. This is clearly seen even in the Old Testament where God makes His covenants with His chosen people and providentially guides them through their perilous journeys, their sad captivities and their returns, giving them a forward look to the Messiah. The New Testament continued with the story of His birth, growth, death and promised return. God's purpose is demonstrated in the gift of the Holy Spirit with its tremendous individual and collective influences. It is carried out in our command to believe on Christ, leave all and follow as did the Twelve whom Jesus called. It is seen in the promise that sin and sorrow will be vanquished by righteousness and joy.

Before God created the world or peopled it, He purposed to form the church and through the church to save His world; it is His unchanging purpose to protect this church with all the resources of heaven and prevent Satan from gaining possession of it. At times, we fear Satan occupies the pews and even the pulpit. We are to take courage; no accidents ever occur in God's plan; human plans frequently go astray; unforeseen events bewilder and produce doubts and pessimism. Whatever may be our attitudes and conclusions, take comfort in the knowledge that God's purposes are as eternal as Gibraltar, unyielding and beyond possibility of contravention. This assurance should encourage Christian workers in spreading the gospel. Every continent has its martyrs for the faith but the blood of martyrs has been fer-

tile soil for the gospel seed; persecution instead of extinguishing the flame of religious zeal fans greying embers and scatters them glowing with renewed life.

"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." All men and all races are to hear the gospel. The world is to be saved, the church battling with sin, uniting believers in Christ, and watched by the angels, is the agent for this task. As our faith in Christ and God's power co-operates, the world changes; redemption is a live movement. Every act of true and unselfish service, every kindness, each sacrifice, each victory over temptation brings a little more light and peace and love and understanding and makes God's kingdom come a little bit closer. This is God's eternal purpose and plan for the ages. Man is to be redeemed through Christ. God's purpose is not complete until this is done.

GOD'S PLANS.

Which he purposed: There is a vast difference between the purposes of man and the purposes of God. "Man proposes but God disposes." Our memories are filled with wrecks of ambitions. We lay our plans with the best of intentions only to see them fall in ruins at our feet; but God, who knows all, purposes the salvation of His creatures, and faithfully carries out that plan throughout the ages. God has a longer time to work upon His plans than man with his brief span of years. But if we lived to the age of the Old Testament patriarchs we would be no different. Our human nature like theirs is frail and weak and erring; God's nature is strong and unbending; for Him to purpose is to create.

Before the foundations of the earth were laid, God made His plan. It is customary, today, for cities to grow along well determined lines; they are no longer willing to follow cowpaths and just grow like Topsy; they want civic centers, suburban boulevards and restricted zones. Man goes to prodigious labors to beautify his earthly home which is temporary. Let us seek God's plan for an eternal home and by foresight, judiciously seek to eliminate that which would separate us from this eternal home.

In the day of the Old Testament patriarchs, God's angels revealed portions of this plan. Christ said (John 6:38), "I came down from heaven not to do mine own will but the will of Him that sent me." Paul's commission revealed the manifold wisdom of God's plan and His eternal purpose. God is raising His spiritual leaders today and directing their tasks as a great builder assigns various workmen particular duties that the whole structure might rise symmetrically and in order. What matters if we do not understand the purpose of God? It should be enough to know that we are doing His bidding; He knows. We are fellow-workers with God and every duty well performed, every gift in the Master's name, every unselfish service, every testimony of God's saving power carries the influence of this purpose a little further. Let us perpetuate the forward look and eager service of the just believers.

IN CHRIST.

In Christ Jesus our Lord: To sum up the message of Christ, Paul uses three words—Christ, Jesus and Lord. Christ is the connecting link between men and angels who have a new interest on earth. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins." Jesus, Lord, King of kings and Lord of lords! At the time of His death He did not seem to be exerting great influence; His crucifixion appeared as defeat and yet within three years, the power of Christ was contesting the might of Rome, and within a few centuries the influence of the church had spread throughout the Empire.

God's eternal purpose is being carried out, today, in Christ who lives within the hearts of His believers. Christ can speak through no other instrument than His recorded word in Holy Scripture and the lives of His followers. If you and I hinder or oppose Him, we frustrate the will of God. In Eph. 1:22, 23, the church is mentioned as being His body, or the fulness of Him that filleth all and in all. The church is the earthly abode of God; the church is the power and grace of God; it proves He lives today.

In how many ways Christ is vitally related to the Christian—God reconciles the world through Christ! “The saints have redemption in His blood.” We are called and built up in Christ; we are complete in Him; we abide in Him; we walk in Him; we are alive in Him; Christ is the hope of glory. These few passages make clear how vital is our relation to Christ. Apart from Christ, there is no salvation.

According to the eternal purpose which He purposed for the church, the living body of Christ, she must have the Spirit of Christ or fail; she must be the voice of Christ, not the voice of its preachers; the church must be the home of Christ to which those with problems may come as they would if Christ lived in the church. Here they find Him and unburden their hearts to Him as in the day of His flesh. The church must always extend the offer of Christ’s forgiveness, give encouragement and point to the new life in Him, impossible elsewhere. The church must reconcile, rebuke, save, guide, build, purify, heal, uplift and minister in His Spirit. Three words outstandingly characterize the life of Christ—love, light and life; all these the church possesses. Christ showed a complex reaction to the times in which He lived; now He rebukes; again He entreats; He invites; then He guides; He purifies and saves; He is about His Father’s business; He wants man to see and know God as He knows Him. If we follow Him in these expressions of life, the church will retain its prestige; in Christ Jesus, the church will “heal the brokenhearted, preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and set at liberty those that are bound.”

XII.

BOLDNESS, ACCESS, CONFIDENCE

"In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." —EPH. 3:12.

REASON FOR OUR CONFIDENCE.

In whom: Paul is very emphatic about Christ being the only means whereby the Christian receives his inheritance. Many blessings were promised the disciples by Christ's death, resurrection and ascension. Every true Christian has promise of eternal glory. We yield to Him with glowing hearts, then our task in the world causes faith to waver; sin is so persistent. We doubt and hesitate, so Christ dwells within us to assure us He is able to keep us from falling. Without Christ, our plight would be more hopeless than that of the Jews in the Old Testament. The world is moving so much faster now; we have greater freedom but in Him we find ourselves equal to our task. Christ gives us boldness.

COME CONFIDENTLY TO GOD.

We have boldness: This is no fantastic hope, but a fact. We not only long for boldness, we have it for a possession. We have undisputed confidence and certain conviction. We have the liberty of speaking with God, drawing near to Him and being intimately associated. A slave stand at a distance from his master, fearing to approach; children draw near. As sons of God and joint heirs with Christ, we can come as confidently to our Heavenly Father as any little child would to an earthly parent, we can speak as freely to God in prayer as any earthly son would to an earthly parent. In prayer we have boldness of utterance, in public confession of Him we are free from fear of criticism or oppression, and an unfettered zest characterizes our service. Paul

intimates our union with Christ gives us a much more intimate association with God than belonged to Moses. Enoch walked with God but we live with God. Disciples are urged to have no hesitancy, to use boldness in making their requests known unto Him, to draw near to the throne and appropriate promised Divine blessings. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may find mercy and grace to help in time of need (Heb. 4:16)." "Let us have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus (Heb. 10:19)." "Cast not away therefore your confidence which hath great recompence of reward (Heb. 10:35)." "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness as always, so not also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death (Phil. 1:20)." "And now little children, abide in him; when he shall appear we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming (I John 2:28)." "For they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus (I Tim. 3:13)." "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things (I John 3:20)." "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, so are we in this world (I John 4:17)." "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us (I John 5:14)."

FREE ADMISSION.

And access: The Greek word "access" is not merely an introduction which will grant audience to the one difficult to see, it implies an unreserved and unlimited freedom of entrance. Christ does not give us a card of admission to go for a single audience, but that spirit of adoption whereby we trustingly cry, "Abba, Father," an access which any child has to its loving parent. Sin separates us from God; Christ washes away sin and gives the one who has sinned a standing of a son in perfect favor; Christ opens the door which sin has closed; Christ wipes away that act which calls for

punishment. The Greek word for "access" describes the ushering of a suppliant into the presence of a monarch able to grant a request. Acts (4:13, 29-31) describes the high privilege of every believer in drawing near to God in the spirit of true worship, and Romans (8:11-15, 38, 39) opens a haven of refuge in time of trouble.

BLESSED ASSURANCE.

With confidence: The preposition "in" appears in some versions in preference to "with." Paul brought all of his needs to the throne of grace with confidence; when others were doubting or distrusting, he confidently trusted God to carry on according to that plan which had been laid out before the foundations of the earth were laid. In spite of all bitter disappointments and heart breaking set-backs, Paul could still write that triumphant declaration of Rom. 8: 38, 39, "Who can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus?" Failure on his own part caused him to place greater confidence in God through Christ. The bolder others became in their persecutions, the more confidently Paul preached his gospel of deliverance (II Cor. 3:4); Christ Himself assured us (II Cor. 10:2) that we need have no hesitancy to come to God or think of Him as a perfect Father. "If we ask anything according to his will He heareth us." We have confidence to trust God as our Father.

MEANS OF POSSESSION.

By the faith of him: The article "the" might well be used in speaking of faith. There is only one faith and that is a saving faith. Christ appealed to this faith before extending healing or performing miracles. He said, "Have faith in God (Mark 11:22)." Paul was unshaken in his belief that a "man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:16)." He reiterates his desire for "that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith (Phil. 3:9)." The faith which all of us need and which all are invited to possess, is of so enduring a quality that we shall remain true to

Christ, confident that He knows our situation and in spite of apparent hardship, will look after our best and permanent good. We are to rise from faith to faith, taking His promises, believing them, acting upon them and growing daily in grace.

Faith has been spoken of as a door to a great treasure-house; the door is not locked; it is not so ponderous as to be beyond our capacity to open it; a little child can open it. God places the treasure. All He asks us to do is to open the door, pass through and enter to find the answer to our longing. Take time to write down the various names used in speaking of Christ. He appears in so many ways to different individuals. The one common element was faith, saving faith; the faith of a friend in a friend, a younger brother in an elder brother, of a servant for his master, of a patient for a physician of repute. We come to Christ knowing that He is acquainted with our every need. While He asks us to speak to Him in prayer, "He knoweth our frame and remembereth that we are dust." Our faith is our acceptance of a personal invitation to appropriate Christ's atonement and intercession. Our faith is belief in our acceptance. His faith in us gives us confidence, and boldness. We can never be separated from Him.

XIII.

IT PAYS TO SERVE JESUS

"Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory." —EPH. 3:13.

THE JOY OF LIFE.

Wherefore: In view of what has just been stated concerning the great mission of the church in carrying out God's eternal purpose and the great trust which has been placed in Paul as an apostle to the Gentiles and in view of the unity which must be present between the believing Jews and the believing Gentiles who comprise the living body of Christ, Paul is about to make a prayer for inner fulness and knowledge in those he was privileged to lead to a saving knowledge of Christ. Paul assures his friends they need have no anxiety or fear for him personally or think all is lost if he shall be called above. Man lives for a day. God has neither beginning nor ending. We live in too much detail. We need to follow the example of David and lift our eyes unto the hills from whence cometh our help. Personal hardships and worries are forgotten as we assist God in carrying out His eternal purpose by continually sowing the gospel seed. God gives the increase in His own time.

TAKE COURAGE!

I desire that ye faint not: We seldom find Paul expressing personal wishes, as here. He feels the time has come to stimulate those at Ephesus who were losing courage and becoming faint-hearted. Some, perhaps, had come to that point where they were losing interest in the development of the church. The apostolic church had problems kindred to our own; the churchless Christian becomes lukewarm and cold. Paul sees no reason why distress, sorrow or persecution should cause work to lag or their zeal lessen. Paul rejoiced

in his tribulation. God is not going to allow His work to stop because some may die.

Possibly the Ephesian church shared the same spirit as those who one day threw palms in the path of Christ and cried, "Hosanna" only to shout a few hours later "Crucify him! Crucify him!" The Ephesians were troubled over the sufferings of Paul. This was worthy of praise. We should never omit a sympathizing tear. Paul was not asking the Ephesian church to forget him or stop praying for him but he was praying that they keep growing as Christians and faint not. God's cause was not to be killed by his imprisonment. The loss of a trench does not lose a battle. No trial in our life should ever cut us away from our contact with God, our belief in Him or our conviction that God's cause can never be killed. There may be dark days and minor set backs but it is as impossible to turn back the cause of righteousness as to try to build a breakwater which would stay the flow of all tides. Like swallows, we would always have it summer with cloudless skies. "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day (II Cor. 4:16)." "That men ought always to pray, and not to faint (Luke 18:1)." God's work is being done. The time of His coming is drawing near.

Let us consider the purpose of our life. Is it not our final glorification? What matter the steps leading to this state of perfection? As the gold must pass through the refiner's fire before it has marketable value, so human beings need to be tested in the furnace of experience to have souls fit for a heavenly ornament. Our final glorification is worth a few trials, pain and difficulties. Our heavenly vision and constant access to God should dispel all fear. After finding this peace, let us point the way to others to relieve them from needless anxiety and worry. Paul was doubtless grieved that his three years at Ephesus had apparently failed to give his converts that calm and complete trust which he himself possessed.

UNSELFISH SUFFERING.

At my tribulations for you: The word "tribulation" is commonly used to express the threshing of corn to remove the kernel from the husk. Suffering has a purifying, separating purpose. The best gifts of life frequently come through pain. It is necessary to understand the meaning of pain in order to benefit by its experience. We should always say, "Not my will but Thine be done."

Paul was more concerned over the spiritual condition of his converts than they were over his imprisonment, persecution and trial. He was more concerned over the falling away of the faint-hearted, who could not stand the gaff than he was over the weakness of his own body and the anæmia aggravated by continued imprisonment. Over and over again he must have repeated to himself, "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us (Rom. 8:18)." Paul was human enough to pray more anxiously when surrounded by his enemies. Trials never kept Paul from his knees. We are forced to our knees by trouble. Recall Job and his suffering permitted by God. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." If Job could remain steadfast without the example of Christ to strengthen him, let us not falter under trial but triumph over hardships incurred by carrying out the work and will of God. If trouble is brought upon us through our purpose to glorify Him, a blessing will be ours.

The sufferings of Paul were not for himself any more than the sufferings of Christ were for Himself. Christ bore in His body the sins of the world; Paul, a Jew, was suffering for Gentiles because Christ died for them and to them he must bring the good news of redemption. Let us rejoice in walking along a *Via Dolorosa* if our suffering may enable us to lead another from darkness into light. He suffered for us. Can we not suffer for Him? If He has seen us through a trial, let us tell others, "The Lord has helped me; I know He is no respecter of persons; He will listen to your prayer." Who knows what the simple story may accomplish for a lost soul? The path of the Christian is uphill. Few steep paths are easy even to the hardened climber.

Paul says, "I glory in my suffering, but do not make me suffer needless by your carelessness and indifference to my Lord." What parent does not suffer because of a wayward child?

CATCH THE VISION.

Which is your glory: We are not asked to take the journey of life blindfolded. Christ opens eyes as well as hearts and minds. Paul would have troubled believers see the New Jerusalem while living in the old; see angels as well as Roman centurions stalking their shadows and tax-collectors dogging their heels; he wished them to remember their immortality while their mortal bodies were ravaged by disease; he wanted mourners to see the stone rolled away as they laid their beloved to rest. Paul, at this time, was not far from the crown for which he had labored. He was eager to pass beyond. He saw glory which exceeded his fondest expectations, but he knew if he failed to continually demonstrate Christ's ability to save him from all that men could do to him, his Lord would be discredited. Paul would hinder the cause for which he was willing to die. If he remained steadfast, Christians throughout all Christendom could gather courage to suffer martyrdom if necessary. Paul suffered not alone to save his soul, but to save the soul of all Christendom. "But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel (Phil. 1:12)." If you have to suffer in the name of Christ, take courage. Some may find Christ through your suffering. We are workers together with Christ and as such may share His tribulations to our glory. Listen attentively to His parables, get a thrill from His miracles but let Christ live within. The Christ of today will receive the same treatment as the Christ who lived in the flesh. If we suffer with the indwelling Spirit of Christ, we have the same strength which Christ never failed to receive from His Father and our Father. The task of saving a sin-cursed world will never be easy; misunderstandings, revilings, wickedness, superstition, the wiles of the devil—all play their part, but the Lord is greater than them all.

What is the glory of the Christian? Primarily, it is God's love for us. His past love sent His only begotten Son to die for us; His past love laid the foundations of the visible church and gave us apostles who suffered the death of martyrs that by their blood, the seeds which they had planted might be nourished; He loves us enough to give us the gift of His Holy Spirit so we may be able to carry on safely and securely until our task is done. Let us, therefore, pray for perfection of faith to endure as good soldiers to the end, thanking God for the noise of battle and our chance to fight in the thick of the fight.

Paul also reminds the Ephesians that his suffering was for their glory. He wrote his friends (II Thess. 1:4) to be steadfast—their patience and faith in persecution and trial is a cause for apostolic glory. Times have not changed. We never read of a revival at home or abroad without glorying in our Christian faith. We are part of this great movement; we never read of a martyrdom for the faith without glorying in the Christ who can inspire such courage and fidelity; unconsciously we breathe a prayer to be true and glorify His name if called upon to suffer for Him.

XIV.

THE ATTITUDE OF PRAYER

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." —EPH. 3:14.

OCCASION FOR THIS PRAYER.

For this cause: Two prayers are found in the Epistle to the Ephesians, the first (1:15-23), addressed to God, seeking spiritual illumination, light and knowledge; the second (3:14-19), addressed to the Father, seeking spiritual energy or power. Paul realized that knowledge of itself is valueless. It must be used as well as obtained. In the preceding chapter, he had spoken of tremendous changes which had taken place in the hearts of Gentile believers; they had accepted Christ but were still lacking much. Paul's imprisonment had filled them with grave fears and doubts which hindered their progress. In order to remove them he prays that they may have spiritual power. Four distinct requests are made; first (verse 16), "that they might be strengthened by the Holy Spirit in the inner man; second (verse 17), that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith; third (verse 18), that they may be able to comprehend the love of God; fourth (verse 19), that they may know, in all its phases, this love of Christ and be filled with the fulness of God.

This prayer for spiritual strength, constant faith, knowledge of God and fulness in Him, can well be made for Christians of all time. Not until we have these can we be members of the universal household and dwell together in brotherhood. Living together is a problem. We need inward strength from Christ; solving every-day household problems calls for the love of Christ; getting along with each other is made easier by having Christ with us. Paul and his associates aimed to develop this spirit of Christian comradeship between Jew and Gentile to that point where they might live together and worship together as one happy family.

Paul intended to make this prayer in verse one of this chapter, but the wonder of his special commission so filled him that he digresses to return, in this verse, to his original purpose. Until God lives in the heart of the believer he cannot be a living stone in a living temple. Christ must live and move and have His being in us; we must have our life in Him.

THE ATTITUDE OF PRAYER.

I bow my knees: Prayer has been variously defined. It is doubtful whether any two would give the same definition of it. It is the "soul's sincere desire, unuttered or expressed" but it sums itself up, in different realizations, the presence of God. It is not limited to words, attitudes or occasions; it does not depend upon the presence of others. It is the communion of a soul with its Maker.

The Bible speaks of various attitudes of prayer. The Pharisees and the Publicans *stood* and prayed (Luke 18: 11-13). Christ said, "When ye stand praying, forgive (Mark 11:25)." Undoubtedly many prayers were voiced by the disciples as they busied themselves with their duties. An occasion demanded instant assistance and prayer was the mode of seeking it. The most frequent references to the attitude of prayer are to prayers made on bended knee. Solomon rose from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven (I Kings 8:54). With all of his wisdom he felt unequal to the task committed to him and though king, he descended from his throne and prostrated himself before God. Daniel was sorely tried; he seemed to stand alone. In order to obtain strength, "he kneeled upon his knees three times a day (Dan. 6:10)." Kneeling was not limited to the worshiping of God. Baal worshipers also kneeled; "all the knees which have not bowed to Baal (I Kings 19:18)."

The New Testament illustrations of kneeling in prayer were quite numerous. When the shadow of the Cross was closing upon Christ and He needed to commune with the Father, "he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed (Luke 22:41)." Stephen

faced death at the hands of an angry mob, stones were flying fast and crushing him, yet "he kneeled down and cried with a voice to God (Acts 7:60)." Peter, as others, possessed the promised gift of healing. The devout Dorcas was dead; friends appealed for help. Peter responded, "put them all out and knelt down and prayed (Acts 9:40)." The spirit of Dorcas returned and she ministered as before. Paul was deeply touched as he bade farewell to the elders of the church at Ephesus. There was a slim possibility that he would never return to see them so "he kneeled down and prayed with them all (Acts 20:36)." The disciples gathered at Tyre to say farewell to their instructor and the one who had inspired them to dare to be Christian. Paul was to set sail to Ptolemais, so before embarking, they "kneeled on the shore and prayed (Acts 21:5)." These illustrations in themselves should be conclusive, but still stronger reference is found in Romans: "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God (Rom. 14:11)."

Paul labored under very deep emotion; as he wrote this letter, he could feel forces gathering to kill him. The Ephesian church was not all that he wanted it to be or all that by the grace of God it could be. So in the eagerness of his desire to have the blessing of God rest upon them, he bowed his knees in reverence, humility, confession and earnest desire to pray towards his Father in their behalf. This attitude expressed his adoration of the Giver of every good and perfect gift, the bent knee gave his body physical humility, his bowed head excluded the world, and his closed eyes permitted concentration upon the petition in behalf of his friends. Have we tried this manner of realizing the presence and power of God? If we kneeled more often in prayer, the answer might be more complete and closer to our requests.

THE FATHER.

Unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: The words "of our Lord Jesus Christ" appearing in the Authorized Version are omitted in some of the early texts. There is no doubt

their inclusion was implied, if not actual. Paul constantly referred to Christ; he never minimized His work or office; he thought of God as Father, because Christ considered Him as such and prayed to Him as such. Paul followed the pattern of the Lord's prayer. He prayed to the Father in the name of Christ, and by the Holy Spirit expected that the answer to that prayer would come from the Father, through the Son and by the Spirit.

The use of the term "Father" is noticeable. The title was addressed to a person as well as a Deity—to God, the perfect Father, who is all we want any father to be. As children we frequently feel that earthly fathers fall short of our ideal; we are loyal to them because of their relationship, we honor them with a dutiful respect, yet feel they lack so much of what a father ought to do and be. How wonderful to find God perfectly displays what has been so imperfectly found in earthly parents! As children of God, seek that perfect good, that ideal love, that complete purity, that absolute truth, that unswerving fidelity, we hunger to possess yet never find. God cares for me. He is not only the Father of all mankind and the Father of Christ, He is *my* Father, He cares for *me* and will fill my every need.

Another suggestion appears in the phrase "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." God is the perfect Father. No son in the history of the world could ever point to a more perfect Father than Christ found in His Father or than we find in our Heavenly Father. The word "Father" takes on a finer meaning when we look to our Heavenly Father as a Guide. Every father might well live each day in attitude, word and activity as he believes the Heavenly Father might live that day were He on earth, living his life. We can't be good fathers until we are Christian fathers, and we can't be Christian fathers until we think of God as our Father and pray to Him as "our Father who art in heaven."

XV.

THE FAMILY OF GOD

"Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."
—EPH. 3:15.

THE FAMILY.

Of whom the whole family: God is the Creator and Ruler of all; King of kings, and Lord of lords; the Eternal and Universal Father, the Father of the Jew and the Father of the Gentile. From Him angels and men derive their name. While the Old Testament occasionally refers to God as Father of the Hebrew nation, the Jews never expressed their feeling toward Him in that affectionate manner which might be expected from sons. Not until Christ became the Son of man was God a Father to be loved and obeyed in love. The Gentile world was accepted into this large family by a process of adoption. Paul is now presenting this newly adopted section of the family to the Head of the Christian household.

Some translate "whole family" and others "every family." Preference would seem to be for "every family." The word "family"—"patria"—is derived from the Greek word for "father"—"pater." As a rule the father sets family standards. Had there been no father there would have been no family; if there had been no God, there could have been no household of faith. There are no limitations and walls of separation in this household; Jew and Gentile are one family bound by cords of love to God from whom all are spiritually descended. We see this family relationship illustrated in the Old Testament by descendants who were known as "sons of David" or "sons of Jacob." Paul writes of "sons of God."

All families are not Christians but all true believers are part of the family of God when they accept Christ as their Savior and look unto Him as the Author and Finisher of

their faith; they are adopted into the family; they may be unworthy sons but they have not lost their sonship any more than the Prodigal Son lost his; as the father was waiting to welcome him back to his rightful place, so God waits to receive every repentant soul.

Paul is undoubtedly thinking here (as in chap. 1:10) "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in him." If this is to be the end of our earthly family why not prepare ourselves for membership in this heavenly circle and cultivate those courtesies and develop the relationship 'one with another which will create a little heaven on earth and cause us to be ready and eager to pass over into the heavenly family? Let us express such courteous relationships in our earthly family that it will seem natural to slip over one by one into the family which is being founded up yonder. Immigrants come to America and one by one send for those who remained in the old country until all are in the new home. So God calls us one by one to our heavenly home. The family circle is a testing ground for Christian ideals; it is a garden-plot in which we can cultivate those flowers which grow in heaven. Those cannot develop perfectly here any more than the palms of Florida can grow luxuriantly in the sturdy New England climate. Let us plant, nurture and maintain this ideal of our family in heaven.

GOD IS FATHER OVER ALL.

In heaven and earth: Some confusion centers around these words and their interpretation. Who are members of the family in heaven and who are members of the family on earth? Jewish rabbis were accustomed to speak of an upper family and of a lower family; the lower family being all those of Israel who obey God, who follow His commands, who had fellowship one with another, who had love one to another, who were faithful in their religious duties, who protected the weaker members of their circle in the name of God; they spoke of the upper family as being those who had been called, as Abraham, to be "gathered unto his

people" and to "go to his father in peace." Others saw in this upper family in heaven, reference to the angels who are blessed with having always been in the presence of God; and see the earthly family as referring to the saints on earth who have believed on Christ and so are saved. Just how close we can make distinctions here is problematical. We are safe in saying that God is the Head of all His creatures both in heaven and on earth, both angelic and human, and that some day He will gather unto Himself in the City not made with hands those whose robes have been washed white by the blood of the Lamb. Each one of us wants to be a member of His heavenly family. There is also an additional suggestion that as angels in heaven learn from the trials of the church on earth, and as the church on earth is strengthened by the knowledge of their conflict with evil beings witnessed by a heavenly host, so the earthly family should vision the heavenly family. We are certain of His love, though not immune to those distractions, terrors and errors which occur because the Head of the family is invisible, seems far distant, and the day of return is not known.

The earthly family is a school for the development of Christian character; it is a field in which Christian virtues may be produced; it is an opportunity for exercising discipline and self-control and preparing ourselves for heavenly citizenship; it is a sanctuary in which God may be worshiped; it is an altar before which we can seek pardon and blessing; it is a spot, where hidden from the world, we can pour out our souls in prayer and thanksgiving; it should always be a household of faith. We cannot but refer to the spirit of that wonderful Murray home in South Africa which, in progressing generations, gave so many to the ministry, both as pastors and pastors' wives. When the mother was asked the secret of this marvelous achievement, she explained it very simply by saying, "I live as I want my boys and girls to live." Could any father or mother do better? May none of us do worse!

GOD GAVE US A NAME.

Is named: All of us carry the name of God. He calls us His children, but we are to be known to the world as being His children. When they see us and analyze us they should know beyond question or doubt we are walking in the light as He was in the light; that we forgive as He forgave because the tradition of our family demands it. We are familiar with the traditions of military service and noble ancestry. For the sake of these traditions many deny themselves, keep a stiff upper lip, remain genteel, carry on and keep true. As sons of God, bearing His image and name, having been chosen heirs of God, having already received a glorious inheritance, let us always live on a plane where our conduct can be easily distinguished as being that of a Christian gentleman or lady. In our social, industrial, political and international relationships, we are all members of a common family; all distinctions are to be wiped away. If we are really conscious of this Divinely ordained family relationship, wars would cease and conflicts between capital and labor would vanish; we would treat our neighbor as our brother and he would treat us as himself.

We bear His name. How proud are descendants of Washington, Lincoln and Roosevelt! Are we as proud and as careful of *our* name, as sons of God? You may be a Jew or a Chinaman or an Italian, and I a native American son. As we share common pardon of sin we are members of the household of faith—brothers in Christ.

XVI.

STRENGTHENED BY HIS SPIRIT

"That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man."
—EPH. 3:16.

THE SPIRIT PRAYS.

That he would grant you: Paul is on his knees praying for the Christians of his earlier preaching. He asks the Father through Christ to give them, if they have proven true, four gifts which are vital to successful Christian living. Realizing their unworthiness, he makes this request even though some of them have been called saints by their fellow Christians. The gifts of God are always free, undeserved gifts. Man can never earn God's rewards. The prayer of others may help bring the answer to our prayer or may influence our conduct. Too few pray for specified objects. In rescue missions, mission stations and evangelistic meetings, it is customary to form prayer lists. This practice should not be restricted to certain seasons or special places but ought to be universal. This prayer is not selfishly made in Paul's behalf; it is entirely unselfish to quiet the fears of leaders concerning him. He is not asking for their health, wealth or the objects for which many pray. He first wants Christ in their hearts, other objects follow naturally. This prayer was being prayed for Christians of all time and for all Christians. Christ within Paul was uttering these words, "the Spirit itself maketh intercession."

THE MEASURE.

According to the riches of his glory: Paul never hesitated to pray for whatever seemed essential to the growth of God's kingdom. He realized the unlimited resources at the hand of an Infinite God and knew God's love for His creatures.

would deny no worthwhile request, particularly one as important as the saving of a soul. He wishes the Ephesians to turn their eyes from their miserable selves to Almighty God. Who would be satisfied with looking at a puddle when an ocean lies just beyond? The inexhaustible, boundless, abundant, full and perfect riches of God are to be drawn upon by the faithful. He is Lord of all to dispense happiness, plenty and freely distribute His bounty. Paul wants those outside of Christ to know the full, pressed down measure of God. False scales, double bottoms and deception might flourish in the market places, but God's measure always overflows. We are so apt to take men's standards and apply them to God. How much is lost because of unbelief! Christ said, "According to your faith be it unto you." "My God shall supply all your need (Phil. 4:19)." "Ask and ye shall receive." There are no limits to what we have a right to ask our heavenly Father to provide for us, provided we seek the growth of His kingdom, the enlarging of our spiritual life, and His glory. The limits of the Christian are self-imposed.

It ought not to be difficult to conceive of the riches of God with so many evidences of it in the physical world. No delicate lace made by human fingers can compare with the fragile beauty found in the delicate veining of an ordinary blade of grass made by God. The construction of anything God has made in the heaven, the earth or the sea, shows this same marvelous, perfect workmanship. Surely God who has so perfectly provided for the needs of fishes, birds, insects, animals and plant life of all climates and countries, in all circumstances and conditions, is not going to be less bountiful for man made in His own image! God can be depended upon to give abundant grace, satisfying glory, adequate truth, sufficient knowledge, the light of understanding, and strength for every-day living to those who ask His favor and desire to serve Him. God is Lord of all eternal, natural and spiritual resources.

These boundless, inexhaustible, abundant riches are presupposed by the glory of God, the glory of His habitual holiness, infinite goodness, eternal mercy and the gift of His

Son Jesus Christ. God's most perfect glory is found in His Son. No one who has seen the glory of a sunrise or sunset, or meditated upon the magnificence of the starry heavens, or seen the transforming glory in a life whose prayer has been answered, can doubt that the same glory is waiting to be revealed in us, His creatures. This glory found in His holy Word is now to be demonstrated in altered lives yielded to Him. The glory of God becomes the glory of man. God's measure is limitless. Shall we give less than our absolute empty selves when we ask Him for filling? Who, promised a bushel of diamonds, would first fill his measure with coal before claiming his diamonds to fill the chinks? Yet many are asking God to fill them when their lives are already occupied with cheap and ordinary qualities.

SPIRITUAL STRENGTH.

To be strengthened: On this particular occasion Paul is not praying for the conversion of his readers but their abundant life through Christ. He realized their weakness. Having recently turned from sin, Satan would be near, hence their need of strength to withstand, and faith that God would do for them as He had for His only begotten Son when tempted.

Solomon chose wisdom above everything else; Paul selecting from the whole range of possible gifts for his friends, chose spiritual strength rather than peace, power, wealth, happiness, influence, or firmness.

All desire strength, but strength of soul surpasses strength of mind or body. Jesus "waxed strong in spirit (Luke 2:40)." The Corinthians were cautioned (I Cor. 16:13) to watch, to "stand fast in the faith, be strong." Paul had urged them not to worry about his imprisonment, now he tells them to be "strong in the Lord," to be strengthened by His Spirit. The Ephesians were worrying about physical things, Paul was worried about spiritual things. In all his letters we find this same prayer. To Timothy he writes, "Be strong in the grace of Christ"; to the church of Colosse, "Be strong with all might unto patience and long suffering

and joyfulness"; to the Corinthians, "Quit you like men, be strong." In a different way but with the same thought in mind, Christ urged would-be followers to have this strength when He referred to the uselessness of salt which had lost its savor. The Christian who has lost strength of holy conviction or who becomes weak in his decisions or lax in his motives has lost his savor and needs the strength or power which comes from God. How many have found that His grace is sufficient to overcome inconsistency, inherent weaknesses, moral irritability and that listless indifference which is responsible for so many lost opportunities. The Christian has no business to be weak. His God-given task demands strength. Strength must first dwell in the believer before it can be transplanted into the convert. A sledge-hammer could never crack a granite boulder unless its handle and head were sturdy. A Christian needs strength within himself before he can be a power in the world outside of himself.

The question might arise, how are we to obtain this strength? The answer is simple—by faith in Christ, love for Him and consciousness that He is the embodiment of all we need. His strength is made perfect in weakness; His love is more constant than the North Star; His perseverance is as immutable as the course of the planets in space. Another suggestion offers itself—in prayer, carry a far vision. Paul saw beyond his time. He knew God will triumph, but his converts must see this day of victory, or, becoming weary in well doing they will slip back into their previous servitude and idolatry. Christian warriors can bolster faint courage by assuring themselves of the Lord's eventual triumph over His foes. The day of battle is the Lord's. How many conflicts are lost by half-heartedness! We must be whole-hearted and true-hearted.

PATIENCE.

With might: Though Paul was of small stature, he possessed physical strength or he would not have been able to go through shipwreck, imprisonment, stoning and persecution without having a nervous breakdown or cracking under the strain. He was a man of might because the Spirit of God

was within him. The Greek word "Dunamis" expresses this power. It is power capable of reproducing itself, hanging on to the end, overcoming enemies, enduring afflictions and resisting temptations. It is nothing less than that power of God which raised Christ from the dead. "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places (Eph. 1:19, 20)." "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us (Eph. 3:20)." Every one who decides to follow Christ needs this strength to prevent wilting and ultimate death of resolves before the first tender leaves of Christian graces appear. The will is vanquished by neutrality and yields to fight no more; the passionate love of a Peter becomes a heated denial. Only God's Spirit enables us to rise above hatred, malice, suspicion and greed. We must be "strong in the Lord and the power of his might."

Knowing the weakness of the early church and the strength of Satan's plans to overcome it with evil, the apostles and disciples were urged to tarry at Jerusalem until endued with power from on high; when filled with the Holy Spirit, they became giants instead of men. They no longer quivered before suffering or were vanquished by their fears before the battle was waged. When God was with them, what matter the odds?

THE SOURCE OF STRENGTH.

By his Spirit: This "Spirit" is the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit of promise, the Holy Spirit of power, the Spirit which is a gift of God and comes into the hearts of believers to abide there. It is this which was promised by Christ (John 14:16-23).

We receive the gift of His Spirit at conversion. "By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body (I Cor. 12:13)," but there is an immediate necessity for daily appropriation of this spiritual strength to stand against temptation and remain steadfast. "If any man have not this Spirit of Christ

he is none of his." This Spirit causes us to bear fruit and possess rich qualities: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Gal. 5:22)." In order to bear so abundant a harvest, this Spirit must completely fill us, entering all corners, crevices and chinks, occupying the spare moments of our days and directing idle thoughts.

THE SEAT OF STRENGTH.

In the inner man: Some translate "in the new man." If we are ever changed it must be because God's Spirit has changed us. All have two personalities—that outer personality which is readily seen by the world and an inner personality which is the motive power of our life. In our natural moral self, living in the deepest and most holy part of our being, Christ must have absolute dominion and permanent residence. He must occupy that inmost recess, "the hidden man of the heart (I Pet. 3:4)." We must "delight in the law of God after the inward man (Rom. 7:22)." "Though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day (II Cor. 4:15)."

We are to be in Him and He is to be in us. "Abide in me and I in you." No casual contact is going to be sufficient, no superficial washing can take away sin; no uplifting moment can sanctify our thinking. Christ has to be all and in all. He seeks the inner shrine. When we are truly Christians, we become Christ-like; when Christ dominates this inner man of the heart, the old man with all its coldness, unfriendless and unforgiving nature moves out. How much more beautiful and desirable are these qualities of the new man which tell others that "we have been with Jesus" and that "Christ liveth in me (Gal. 2:20)."

Some doubt whether or not Christ has taken possession of the inner man. When we have caught this fearless spirit which carries on in spite of everything, and is willing to be stoned, persecuted, slandered and ridiculed for Christ's sake, we have what Christ wanted us to have when He laid the foundations for this living church and gave the Spirit to fill our lives. Then the touch of God in our soul will

create attractive virtues, draw others and stimulate imitation. The rose attracts by its fragrance; it needs neither sign nor announcer. We like the Prodigal Son need to come to ourselves and return to God. Paul was quite right in his desire to touch the inner life of his hearers. This inward change would banish his worry about future conditions when absent from them. This new spirit in the hidden man could not be quenched by stones or destroyed by fire. Have we strength in the inner man or do we still feel painfully feeble, totally crushed and incompetent? He is waiting to give us saving faith, practical trust, uplifting humility, perfect love and the reflected glory of God's strength in the inner man. "Seek and ye shall find."

XVII.

THE PERMANENT INDWELLING OF CHRIST

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love." —EPH. 3:17.

SOURCE OF STRENGTH.

That Christ: The article "the" might be included before the word "Christ" — "that the Christ may dwell in your hearts." As there is only one God, there is only one Christ. The Christ is the longed-for Messiah who, in His offices, becomes Prophet, Priest and King. He is Lord, Leader, Master and Guide. The Mohammedan finds comfort and merit in counting on his prayer-beads the different names of his Allah. How much more can the Christian receive from enumerating the various titles of Christ — each one suggestive of some gift of God to man and each one assuring him that this Christ is His and must be His if he desires a place in heaven! If we do not have the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us we are none of His (Rom. 8:9). The source of strength is not found within ourselves; it comes from God, enters us, fills us and passes through us. We are like storage batteries, charged to release what has been received but constantly needing replenishing to maintain life and strength.

THE REALITY OF CHRIST.

May dwell in your hearts: Christ does not knock at the door of our heart like a caller who spends a few moments, leaves a card and passes on. He desires to permanently live in our hearts, to make His dwellingplace there and to stay to guide our soul to its destiny in heaven. That is why true religion is a seven-day religion. Contact with the Spirit of Christ is insufficient; He must be fused with our thoughts, and take complete possession of us. In the new heavens and

the new earth, righteousness dwells permanently (II Peter 3:13.).

As Christ dwells habitually in our hearts we have access to Him and He to us. We must be together if temptation is to be overcome. He must enter our heart once and for all. A seed cannot bear fruit unless it has the spirit of life. A dead seed is always dead. A dead soul can be made alive by the presence of Christ. To have Him is to have life. Christ lives in our hearts to give us constant life and hope. Faith is a door through which He enters. Having once admitted Him we will never close the door again to Him. Having let Him in, it will not be necessary to imprison Him. He is never a prisoner in our hearts; when He enters He remains as a friend, the door of our heart is open wide to receive others in the name of Christ and our testimony and conviction will cause other hearts to let Him in. The Christian heart is open. The evil heart is closed to good and filled with evil. The evil heart is closed to Christ and hardened against His presence. The redeemed heart is open to His suggestions and characteristically responds to His wishes. When He lives with us, the temptation to sin is removed from us.

Devout Jews from every corner of the world gathered at Jerusalem to be near the Holy City for a season, Acts 2:5. They found comfort in fellowship with others who had the same Messianic longing with themselves. Being near to the Holy City brought happiness. The Christian has greater joy; Christ lives in his heart. It is not necessary to journey toward Jerusalem for the Spirit of the New Jerusalem dwells with him. "He dwelleth with you and shall be in you (John 14:17)." He maketh His abode with us. What a rich experience. Does He dwell with you? Some spirit must dwell in your heart. Shall it be Christ's?

THE INNER SHRINE.

In your hearts: A profession of religion may be an acted falsehood. How bitterly Christ denounced the Pharisees for their hypocrisy. Religion belongs in the heart. External washing is seed on stony ground, the heat of adversity soon

consumes it. As a man thinketh in his heart so is he. Christian graces begin to bud after Christ takes possession of the heart. He lives in the heart of every genuine Christian (I Cor. 6:15, 17). The heart is the seat of the conscience, the affection, the will and the imagination. Until these are changed life cannot be transformed. The heart may be passive or active. "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves (II Cor. 13:5)." There is room for only one in our heart—Christ or Satan. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." When He comes in the heart we become like Him. Those who have lived together many years gradually come to have facial similarities. When we have lived with Christ and He with us, we become Christ-like. Let us be sure of our profession of religion. Lip service or an emotion on the surface of our thinking is inadequate. A settled conviction in our hearts, an inward purpose to cleave unto the Lord will bring His Spirit and peace in our hearts. When He dwells in our hearts we know we have pardon and acceptance. "Settle it therefore in your hearts (Luke 21:14)." "With purpose of heart . . . cleave to the Lord (Acts 11:23)." "The love of God is shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5)."

THE OPEN DOOR.

By faith: Unbelief keeps Christ away; faith gives Him welcome. Faith is sincere trust, conscious desire and trustful acceptance. Prayers for a given person or cause, however frequently repeated, can never be effective until faith receives Christ. Faith opens the door of a needy soul. Doing God's will strengthens our faith. Faith takes one step at a time. Faith accepts a promise and begins living as though it were true. Faith lets love lead the way. "If a man love me he will keep my words . . . and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him (John 14:23)." "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me (Rev. 3:20)." "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the

light, lest his deeds be reproved (John 3:20)." "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Rom. 10:17)." "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me (Gal. 2:20)." Faith sometimes needs to be unsatisfied. It is not always easy to believe in Christ. It is hard to believe in people we have seen and it is harder to believe in Christ whom we have not seen. Life's bitter experiences make us cautious in placing absolute trust in any power which offers us as much as does the Spirit of God. But we must never confuse faith in man and faith in Christ. Faith in man will always rest upon an unsteady foundation but faith in God must be unwavering.

THE CONDITION OF RECEPTION.

That ye being rooted and grounded: Paul gives as universal an invitation as was ever given by Christ. No missionary, pastor, teacher or Christian worker has a right to place any limits on God's power to save. No past sin should stand in the way. "Whosoever will let him come and drink of the water of life freely." There is sufficient soil and foundation for all.

Two illustrations are suggested here: first, a plant with well established roots; second, a building resting on a firm foundation. We are to be firmly attached to Christ; He is the Vine, we are the branches. As a tree cannot bear fruit unless it is well rooted, neither can the Christian bear the fruits of the Spirit unless his roots are nourished in love. A stable building rests upon an adequate and firm foundation. We are to be stable as an oak, firm and solid as a skyscraper. "Rooted and built up in him and stablished in the faith (Col. 2:7)." Every Christian is a tree of the Lord planted by the river of waters (Psa. 1:3). "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree (Psa. 92:12)." Wherever Christ is firmly planted and settled in the heart, love will abound for God and the brethren.

THE SOIL.

In love: What is this love in which we are to be rooted and grounded? 1. Is it our love for God and His kingdom based upon His love for us? We are to love Him with our whole heart, body and soul. 2. Is it God's love for us? His love maintains us. We feed on His Word. Our happiness is empty without Him. 3. Are we to be rooted in Christian love in general? We are told to love our neighbor as ourselves, love our enemies and do good to those who despitefully use us. We are modern good Samaritans. In view of the context, the second interpretation seems most probable. We are to feed upon God's love for us. This love for sinful mortals fills us with wonder; the loving sacrifice of Christ on the Cross touches us to the point that we are willing to turn the other cheek, to keep silent when anger flames, to do good to those that despitefully use us and be unselfish in the expression of our life. Let His light flood your soul. A few rays of God's love can do no more for us than an occasional ray of sunshine can do for plants whose leaves are yellow and sickly. Live in the light of His love as Christ dwelt in the Father's love. Be sturdy, hardy plants. Love is the rich, deep soil in which every Christian must find his strength. Love is also the mortar which binds together living stones into a living temple. Jews and Gentiles are brought into Christian fellowship and brotherhood. The fruit of this love is as apparent as the fruit of any plant. "By their fruits ye shall know them." If we are rooted and grounded in love we will love our neighbor as ourselves; we will be imitators of Christ in all things; we will yield willing obedience to His every command; we will have a burning zeal to fight for that which honors Him; His love keeps us from being weary in well doing.

XVIII.

DIMENSIONS OF CHRIST'S LOVE

"May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length, and depth, and height." —EPH. 3:18.

A WIDE RANGE.

May be able: Paul has been describing the believer's heavenly calling. He points them to God's habitation in heaven and describes their task in the world in which they live. Appreciating the difficulties which confronted them, he prays that they may have their hearts thoroughly established in Christ and their minds given to understanding and appreciating the power of God. This is not as easy as it might seem: it requires absolute confidence; it necessitates complete abandonment to the will of Christ; but it produces an abundant reward and capacity for greater service. The word "able" is frequently translated "strong." Paul therefore prays that disciples may gain strength as they completely and abundantly understand Christ's strength of character; strength of purpose and strength of conviction will necessarily follow. Undoubtedly Paul sees a new crisis looming before the struggling Ephesian church. He knows they can safely pass through future dangers if their faith possesses strength. The Christian who is well rooted and grounded in the love of Christ has inward strength enabling him to stand. If a skyscraper is to resist wind pressure, stand against the dangers of earthquakes and the vibration of constant traffic, it needs to be well strengthened with an inner framework of steel. The outer facing of stone is supplementary. The inner life of a Christian is more important than outward beauty of conduct.

INDIVIDUAL EXPRESSION.

To comprehend: Our knowledge of God's love is to be more than memorization; it requires logical reasoning and experience. Many people have an intellectual knowledge of numerous facts about the religion of Jesus and yet the possession of these facts may not correct the natural weaknesses of their character. Paul implies that we do not comprehend until we both know and apply the teachings of Jesus. First, we apprehend and then we comprehend; first, we desire to see, then succeed in seeing and finally appropriate, through some channel of experience, what we have seen. One has classified knowledge of God as experimental knowledge, influential knowledge, and assimilating knowledge. All three should be possessed by alert, conscientious followers of Jesus.

It is impossible to find the knowledge for which we are looking by mere study of the Bible or by a critical inspection of its phrases. Reason falls far short in defining the love of God. We have to love God in order to understand Him. The love of a mother for her child causes her to see in it what no one else believes to exist there. God's love, for us, his erring children, reveals to Him what we cannot fathom, and causes Him to personally claim us for His own and endeavor through His love to win us for Himself. Love is a key which opens all the secrets in the realm of faith. Christ cannot truly dwell in our hearts unless love has opened the door of our heart. While love helps us to understand God, it cannot give complete knowledge of God. We are finite; He is infinite. We are hampered by the sin which so easily besets; He is sinless. These imperfections should never deter us from using what knowledge we have. The reward of knowing God, even in a haze, is sufficient justification for seeking Him. Our growing knowledge of Him cannot fail to humble us and take away any possible superior complacency which might tempt us, because we possess knowledge others have not discovered.

There are various reasons why the Christian should never rest or relax his efforts to comprehend God. First, the more we know of God, the more like God we become; the clearer

we see His purposes; the more we desire to be what He wishes us to be. Sin always clouds the issue. It is like the blur of frost on a mirror which temporarily defeats the purpose for which the mirror was created. Knowledge of God wipes away this mist and brings us clearer vision. We are able to see ourselves as God sees us, and we seek to alter ourselves to conform to His ideal. The story is told of Pharnascus who, while still in a state of rebellion against Cæsar, sent him a gift of a beautiful golden crown. Cæsar returned the crown with this message, "First yield obedience and then make presents." The second reason for comprehending God is to obtain the happiness which we obtain from association with those similarly minded. God's chosen people have so much in common. Their tasks give them quiet, calm and peace. Though lacking much, they find happiness in walking in the path of Jesus and doing His will. Marching men know the thrill of keeping in step. We are to be in step with Jesus. The certain knowledge of His love and forgiveness brings serenity of spirit. A sense of comradeship develops from sharing some new discovery with another. Day by day new truths open new worlds to explore. This joy is worth all that it costs to obtain it. Finding Christ is more satisfying than finding a lost treasure or acquiring a goal in the accumulation of wealth. So many have had the experience of achieving their goal, only to be disappointed that their attainment seemed so little worth the effort. Finding Christ as a personal Savior changes our objectives. The third reason justifying our search for knowledge of God is the sense of security which access to Him brings. As we confess Him before men and unite with others in prayer for definite and unselfish objects related to God's will for today, we find our interest and gaze centering around the Cross and this common focus brings stimulation, strength and power. A great many have found that "there is life in a look at the crucified One."

A BROAD FELLOWSHIP.

With all saints: Each generation benefits from experience of those who have gone before. Christians particularly re-

ceive nourishment from the saints of other days. As we possess Christ, we are also brought into contact with those who have loved Him in the past and found in Him their all and all. This vast company of yesterday and their experiences are gifts to the new convert. "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another (Rom. 12:5)." There is never any lack of interest in the development of a Christian. He is relieved of the tension of the present by recalling the grace and light of those who suffered for Christ's sake, the changes they, by God's grace, have made in the growth of the church, and the cumulative power of today's faith. Each saint interpreted Christ from a different viewpoint and found in Him that which changed weaknesses within themselves. One found Christ altogether righteous; another was amazed at the glory revealed in Him; again, a saint sees in Christ the only One worthy to be called Lord; the death on the Cross appeals to another. As we study these various saintly viewpoints we have a clearer picture of what Christ can mean to ourselves and to our friends, and we can be absolutely certain that whatever He has meant to us He can mean still more. Our earthly knowledge of Him can never reach the limit of our capacity of understanding Him.

Let us not fail to recognize the work of saints. In Chap. One we are told to love all the saints; in Chap. Six, we are asked to pray for all the saints. This does not mean that we can communicate a saving knowledge of Christ to the saints, for they already possess it; but there is a difference between a saving knowledge of Christ and a comprehending knowledge of Christ. We may know enough about Christ, to walk at His feet and say, "Lord, save me lest I perish," and yet not know Him well enough to rise from our knees and face the temptations of our life. This reference to the saints is to enable us to take advantage of anything of theirs which will help us make our life a success. God does not limit knowledge of Himself to a few. All have capacity for saintly lives. We must be willing to pay the price of obtaining knowledge and applying it.

CHRIST'S LOVE IS AS WIDE AS THE WORLD.

What is the breadth: These four dimensions have given rise to a great deal of discussion. Doubtless they have been interpreted in a far different way from that intended by Paul. Some see here an illusion to the Cross of Christ, the height referring to Christ's Godhead, the depth to His manhood, the length and breadth to the extent of His mission. Jerome believes the height to be the holy angels, the depth the realm of evil spirits, the length to be the upward power which leads to God and the breadth the broad way which leads unto death. From a different angle Pontius sees the universal salvation offered by Christ, who from the height ascended into heaven, who by depth descended into Hades, who in breadth broadcasts His offer of salvation to all the world and who, in length, extends His invitation through all eternity.

Paul does not complete this sentence, which is one of the two unfinished sentences in Scripture. Pleading to God for his people Moses says, "If thou wilt forgive (Ex. 32: 32)," and stops. He remembers that the law does not speak of forgiveness and yet feels that somehow God will show mercy. Perhaps Paul was thinking of Job 11:8, 9; but it seems logical that he was considering only the love of God, the marvelous richness of it, the power of it, and finding it impossible to describe it, pauses. It is like standing at the foot of Niagara and beginning to write concerning it: the majesty of the tumbling, roaring waters makes it impossible to find words to fitly describe the grandeur of the scene; the pen writes no more. So Paul suggests the overwhelming magnitude of God's love and pauses, hoping his readers may feel with him.

Who fails to see the breadth of God's love? Previously confined to the Jew, it now includes the Gentile. There is no limit to it; no individual or group can say to another, "You are excluded and cast away." Lack of money is no bar; poverty makes no difference; sin can shut no door God's mercy cannot open. The love of God reaches beseechingly toward every human heart in the length and breadth of the world and offers a sanctuary with free salvation to all. Paul

prays that all may reach for it, may seek and find. Alexander Maclaren very beautifully writes, "He loved all, therefore He loves me; He loves me, therefore He loves all." The mere fact that I am conscious of God's love for me proves that every other seeking heart can have a similar sensation. God has no favored step-children in His household. His love is broad, universal, deep, intimate, tender, lofty, ever-lasting and Divine.

The feeding of the five thousand is a practical parable of His ability to fill every soul. All were fed and filled; as no one of the five thousand was more satisfied than another, so, in our individual lives, Christ can fill each to his uttermost capacity, until it seems as though His whole love was centering upon a single soul. Who has not stood on the shore of a lake and seen the moon shimmering on its waves and beheld the path of light which appears to come directly from the moon to himself? Some one else may be standing at some distance away and for him also, there is a path of silver. The love of God appears in just that way to us. Our standing or our state makes no difference, His love is always there, and appears sufficient for, and apparently *just* for, all our needs. It is a personal love, not a general impersonal thing; though it is as broad as the necessities of the world, it is still mighty and deep enough for our needs. Most streams become shallow as they broaden; they are deep only when narrow. But though the stream of God's love is as wide as all humanity, it is deep enough to free every broken heart and every blind, blasted and sinful soul. "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgression from us (Psa. 103:11, 12)."

ETERNAL LOVE.

And length: The love of God extends throughout all ages. Beginning with the creation of man it carries through without interruption until the day when "there shall be a new heaven and a new earth"; it defies all the religions of all time; it rises above any accident and it survives in spite of

any condition which can be imposed upon it; it never grows weary as the centuries roll by; it does not lose its force as countless thousands take it as their possession. As long as a human life inhabits the world to the end of time, that love tenderly and unfailingly ministers to each heart. How satisfying to know that from the beginning of my consciousness of that love it can carry me until the end of my days and will never fail! We see so many human loves becoming weary with the load they carry—pausing, unable to continue to the end. But His love contains vital dependable strength to endure in spite of all crises and opposition.

This love of God and the love of God in Christ exists from everlasting to everlasting. Our love frequently finds its patience exhausted. Our sins are enough to exhaust the patience of God, but He continues with us each step of our journey in the hope that, sometime, we will yield. "Love suffereth long and is kind, is not easily provoked and is not soon angry"; "having loved his own which were in the world he loved them to the end"; "having begun a good work in you he will perfect it." When He says, at the close of our life, what He said at the close of His own, "It is finished," what a glorious moment it will be! It tells the triumph of eternal love. It is stimulating to think of such a love in a world where we see so many evidences of people playing out like runners who start for a five-mile goal and stop exhausted and winded after the first few hundred yards. Those who live for material things find themselves completely exhausted before death do them part. His enduring love can put permanence into our love. Christ dwells within us, to permit His love to operate through us. We exchange our love for His.

LOVE WHICH KNOWS NO MEASURE.

And depth: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! (Rom. 11:33)." Here is wisdom no man can fathom. By depth, we can think of Christ's love as reaching down into the depths of man's degradation and lifting him to sonship. Divine love converts

by stooping to turn wayward hearts toward their heavenly inheritance. The depth of sin cannot keep Christ from the sinner, or take away Christ's desire to be with him. Christ descends in His work of rescue. No rescue party dare enter the danger zone in mines where explosions have taken place until air is found to be pure; but Christ comes wherever and whenever souls, lost in sin, need Him. The same royal Christ who left heaven to live in a manger, gives Himself to the utmost to each seeking sinner and loves him to the limit in order to draw him away from his sin into that perfection which can come from Him alone. God grant that we may possess this same Divine ability and eager desire to lift those who have fallen! The depth of Christ's love was seen in the self-sacrificing, willing way He exhausted Himself with people and sinners to open their eyes to the Light of Life.

REACHES INTO HEAVEN.

And height: The height of God's love is the throne in heaven, upon which Christ sits. It gives those who possess it freedom from their foes. Satan cannot take it away. "When he ascended up on high he led captivity captive (Eph. 4:8)." In order to measure depth, we begin at the throne of God and go down to the Cross of Christ; to measure height, we begin at the Cross and ascend to the throne of God. A man climbs toward a mountain range which rises on the horizon; the top of each hill, which seems to be the height desired, reveals a still higher range; he climbs higher and higher until ranges lie far below him. The summit is regal in loveliness and aloofness. In the physical world, heaven never touches earth, it only resistingly allures the one who is searching to bring his gaze upon it; but in the spiritual world, heaven always comes down and touches the heart of a believer. The kingdom of heaven is within us. "I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am (John 17:24)."

God's love is broad, extending to all mankind; God's love

has length reaching to all eternity; God's love has height reaching heaven and bringing the object of its love into heaven. Let us remind ourselves that it is possible for us to be completely familiar with this love, and yet have no part of it within ourselves. It is possible for a bottle to drift in the sea, for months and years, and yet be empty. Our hearts are to be filled with this love; in other words, we are to take our life and dip down into this great love of God until we can say, "My cup runneth over," and we shall have the fulness of God within us.

XIX.

THE GREATNESS OF CHRIST'S LOVE

"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

—EPH. 3:19.

THE FACT IN EXPERIENCE.

And to know: The knowledge suggested is decisively knowledge of a spiritual nature. We are to know His love and power. We are to add daily to our knowledge. A paradox exists here; we are asking to know what passes knowledge and is infinite in character; we are told to approach closer and closer to the knowledge of Christ which leads to understanding of man. While we cannot know Christ's love in its complete fulness, we can know it as a fact in our experience; we can share it, we can know something of its nature and we can share our facts with those who do not possess them. Again, as in the preceding verse it is evident that knowledge of Christ comes from love of Him and love for those for whom He died. We can never know Him until we love His creatures, and we can never love humanity until we love God. "He that loveth not, knoweth not God (I John 4:8)." It takes love to see love. Using again Paul's dimensions of love we need never fear that we can exhaust Christ's love. It is impossible to ever reach the end of it. Hence the zeal with which Paul prays that we might begin to know the heart of God; that we might revel in the hope of His calling, might enjoy the riches of His inheritance and might be familiar with the working of His mighty power within us.

WONDERFUL LOVE.

The love of Christ: It is impossible to completely define Christ's love to us because it appears to each recipient in a different form. We must know what He lovingly did for us

and for our sakes. We must see the Cross He lovingly bore, we must acknowledge the tender, deep, free, patient love which caused Him to love the true church and give Himself for it. We must believe He loves me and gives Himself for me. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me (Gal. 2:20)." There will always come a time when we will grasp His promise as a drowning man reaches for a life preserver. Our case seems so desperate; He seems so mighty, pure and far from us that at times it is hard to believe He can love us, forgive us and change us; we have been so indifferent to Him, at times even hostile toward Him and resisted His advances; there has been frequent disloyalty, coolness and laxness in discipleship, how can He love us? How happy we are made by the message of John 3:16! God's love was so broad, as to love the world and me; so intense, as to cause Him to give His only begotten Son; so deep, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, so high, that those redeemed by His hand have everlasting life.

Christ's life, from the Annunciation to the Ascension was one continuous unfolding of His love; His patience seems inexhaustible; He is willing to endure anything for His friends; He glories in suffering that, by this means, He may win souls to Himself. The scorn of His enemies does not sour Him; His burdens do not exhaust His patience. What knowledge, sought by men, can ever rival the discovery of His love for men, His death for me and His waiting to receive us unto Himself! As a breeze fills a sail and carries the boat forward to its haven, so the love of Christ carries the believer Godward and heavenward. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ (Rom. 8:35-39)," which forgives sin, saves by Divine grace, transforms, makes new creatures, restores prodigals and brings backsliders into favor with God?

BEYOND MEASURE.

Which passeth knowledge: We find it impossible to find a word to define knowledge which surpasses and exceeds human

understanding. The suffering and death of Christ are far beyond any human sacrifice; no other death was related to the forgiveness of sin. Many have died a sacrificial death but their deaths could not save a sinner from his sin. Frequently we hear of those who, in war, have died for their friends; in peace, mothers have paid the supreme sacrifice that their children might live. But there is no comparison between such deaths and the death of Christ on the Cross. "No man knoweth the Son save the Father (Matt. 11:27)." Because man is finite, he can never grasp infinity. "The peace of God passeth all understanding (Phil. 4:7)." We can know some of it, we may receive it, we can add to our possession of it, but we can never say we understand it. It ever invites us, it always allures us. It comes not from man to man but from a Supreme Being to a creature made from the dust of the earth. The writers of the Old Testament felt this limitation. "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard." The prophets were perpetually asking, "What does this mean?" The angels found many things they did not know. John the Baptist, standing before Jesus says, "I knew him not but he that sent me to baptize him said, He is the Son of God. He must increase but I must decrease." The twelve apostles were perpetually bewildered by His teaching and life. We, ourselves, are in no better condition, and yet, though our experience is incomplete and always will be, we profit by meditating and reflecting upon the knowledge of God; we gain in appreciation of the world in which we live; we see new evidence of His control of our natures. Rest assured we can adapt enough of this knowledge to our present condition to bring us happiness, peace and health of soul. First, learn of Him and accept Him as personal Redeemer, then perpetually seek His love and continually claim His pardon until we are made perfect even as the Father in heaven is perfect. Columbus discovered America but how little he knew of it! He merely touched the eastern shore; he never penetrated to the vast plains or the Mississippi valley, or climbed the altitudes of the Rocky Mountains, or saw the beauties of the Pacific slope. Yet his discovery thrilled the world of his time and the world says, to this day, "Columbus discovered America." Our discovery of God

is incomparably less complete than was the discovery of Columbus; yet it can bring us all that we need to know, until we stand face to face with Him and know as we are known.

EVEN ME!

That ye might be filled: The "ye" refers to all who accept Christ as their Savior. The quantity of their filling is to the limit of their capacity. This filling is not due to anything which they have within themselves, it comes from without. In times of drought, river beds go dry because they have not received from higher sources that which fills them from shore to shore. We are to be filled with the knowledge of God (Col. 1:9); the God of hope is to fill us with all joy and peace in believing; we are to be full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to admonish one another (Rom. 15:13, 14); Christ hath all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily (Col. 2:9). Only as we are filled with His fulness can we fulfill His expectations for us. Every faculty and every part of our being must be filled and kept filled; we are to be filled like the overflowing bowl of a fountain, fed from never-failing springs. We are filled in Him, or, as the apostle expresses it later, "We are complete in him." After self-examination are we filled with Him or are we filled with the world, with selfishness, and self-satisfaction? Before we can be filled as He wishes, we must first empty ourselves of everything in our mind, heart, and spirits. "We are to be what God would be, if He were in our place." Self is to be completely obliterated. We are to let Christ keep our life *for* us, until such time as He calls us to be with Him. Our life is not safe in our own hands. Satan is too anxious to obtain it. It is best to give ourselves to the One Who is able to keep us from falling.

THE STANDARD TO BE REACHED.

With all the fulness of God: The preposition "with" implies a process or growth up to or unto Divine resources. We are not to be satisfied with present spiritual attainments. We are to grow and increasingly keep full. As the growing

plant is continually filled with the spirit of life, we are to be filled with the Spirit of God. We cannot contain the infinite but we can be filled with a part of that which is infinite. A cup cannot contain the ocean; but a cup can be filled with undiluted ocean water. We can be filled with the fulness of God; but we can be in the world and yet not of the world. The love of God is to be everything or nothing.

All the fulness of God is to be ours; the riches of the Godhead is our possession, and abundance; the Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. The sum of Divine perfection is our inheritance, the sum total of Divine riches, grace, blessing and attributes are to be ours. It is said of Christ (Col. 2:9), "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." The church is spoken of as the fulness of Him that filleth all and in all. "Ye are partakers of the divine nature (II Pet. 1:4)." His wisdom, truth, knowledge, righteousness and love are ours. We are to be filled with these attributes as God is filled. We are to be so filled as to exclude the petty disturbances which mar the beauty of Christian living. As the tide sweeps into the flats and fills all the unsightly bays and covers the heavy odors and black mud, so the fulness of God enters all our hearts and separates that which distresses, saddens and mutilates.

We cannot possess omniscience, omnipresence nor omnipotence but we can be Christ-like; we can have His love in our hearts and approach closer and closer to the Divine ideal; we can have power to overcome sin in proportion to our fulness of God. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect (Matt. 5:48)"; "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ (Eph. 4:13)"; "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part: but then shall I know even as also I am known (I Cor. 13:12)"; "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren (Rom. 8:29)."

Man created in the image of God is to be filled with all the gifts which characterize God; we are to grow in the stature of Christ and that perfection which defined Him; we are to be filled with His joy. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full (John 15:11)"; "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full (John 16:24)"; "And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves (John 17:13)." We are to be filled with His peace. The bottle that is filled can be turned in every direction without vitally disturbing its contents, but if it is half filled it can be churned into minor tempests.

We are to be filled with His righteousness as a tree filled with good fruit (Phil. 1:11). A tree which does not bear abundant good fruit will be cut down as useless and occupying valuable space. In the light of what He expects, are we empty or full? Let us pray that we may abound in knowledge, faith, love, good works and all the fulness of the Godhead.

XX.

ASSURANCE AND PROMISE

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."
—EPH. 3:20.

PRAISE TO THE FATHER.

Now unto him: The Second Book of Chronicles (7:1-3) records the dedication of the Old Testament Temple; verse twenty and twenty-one of this chapter are the Doxology sung at the dedication of the living temple of which we are a part. Seven formal doxologies appear in Paul's Epistles, all of them following a description of God's gifts to man, and each of them blessing Him for His mercy and love (Rom. 11:36; Rom. 16:27; Phil. 4:20; Eph. 3:21; I Tim. 1:17; I Tim. 6:16; II Tim. 4:18). The Father is the Object in each case to be blessed by those who have been saved by the blood of the Son. Paul has been speaking in a very intense fashion; his mind and heart are overflowing with emotion; like David, he needs to break forth into some exaltation of praise before he can continue writing. The glory of God is so overwhelming; the marvel of receiving from this Divine Being so many gifts of heaven, compels humble and devout adoration. Having just prayed that all believers may have the fulness of God, he now addresses the One from whom all fulness flows. He commands us in these brief words to stop—to stand still—and see the salvation of God.

OMNIPOTENCE.

That is able: Paul not only implies that God has supreme power but also that He actually does what He is able to do. He works through those who believe on Him, placing in their hands His vast resources. This plan is not impos-

sible because God is able to fulfill every part of it. We need to remind ourselves of God's ability before we begin our prayers lest we ask for inconsequential gifts. When God places no limitations, why should we be satisfied with trifles and baubles? "Who has power to stablish you according to my gospel (Rom. 16:25)"; our faith rests upon, and is encouraged by God's ability (Jude 24); "With God all things are possible (Matt. 19:26)"; What He had promised He was able to perform (Acts 20:32; Rom. 4:21); "God is able to graff them in again (Rom. 11:23)"; God is able to make him stand (Rom. 14:4); "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work (II Cor. 9:8)"; Christ is also "able to subdue all things unto himself (Phil. 3:21)"; "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him (Heb. 7:25)"; "Able to heal the sick (Matt. 9:28)"; "Able to succour them that are tempted (Heb. 2:18)"; "Able to deliver (Dan. 3:17)."

THE LIMITLESS ONE.

To do exceeding abundantly: A single Greek word expresses what requires two English words to describe. The Greek word is the "superlative superlative." It is the strongest possible word to express that which is limitless, beyond comprehension, infinite, in excess of expectations; in other words, after we have said everything which is in our power, we still are infinitely below the reality of God's ability to perform. The promises of Scripture are far beyond anything which we have expected. We taste so delicately; our faith is so uncertain. If only we could appropriate all that God has placed at our disposal, our life would be on an infinite plane. A sincere Christian can never pray for anything that God cannot do. We forget that God created us with the express intention of demonstrating His wealth and power through us, and, that if we fail to permit Him to demonstrate His power through us, we are limiting Him and denying ourselves many rich and profitable experiences. God's ability is never misused or limited by our ability to ask or

think; His power goes far beyond our thought, imagination, hope or finest calculation. We are so used to measuring the power of industry, the potential power of a waterfall, the energy in a gallon of gasoline, or the serviceability of electricity that we tend to compute the power of God. This is impossible. We may as well try to measure the energy of an ocean after dealing with but a tiny waterfall. The power of God is measured, not only in the physical world but also in the spiritual realm. His abundance waits for each believer to appropriate what was intended for him (Phil. 1:6; II Cor. 9:8).

God always demonstrates His ability in overflowing measures; Christ gives the call, "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." He told the woman of Samaria of "living springs"; His invitation to accept forgiveness was not limited to any form of temptation or individual weakness but covered the entire category of sin and the whole of mankind. His declaration of immortality announced death had been overcome and assured every soul an awakening in His likeness; the stone will be rolled from our tomb. Controlled by Divine laws, we are given every encouragement to pray without hesitation for everything which is absolutely necessary for our growth or personal happiness. "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." He placed planets, constellations and stars in the heavens which, like grains of sand on the seashore, have not been counted. He glorifies the bare branches of a tree with countless leaves to shade the ground from which it takes its strength. The raindrops which moisten the parched ground and enable plants to absorb minerals are not given with meagerness but come with an abundance which defies calculation. The dew does not fall in occasional drops; every blade of grass glistens with sparkling crystals. The snowflakes fall from the heavens in abundance sufficient for the needs of nature and the requirements of mankind. Who has ever counted the flowers of a single meadow? We are invited to "ask what we will"

and it will be "done unto us." We receive the challenge, "Prove me now . . . if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it (Mal. 3:10)."

GOD IS ABLE.

Above all: In this verse Paul rises to great literary heights. Words fairly tumble over each other in an effort to impress others with what he sees so clearly—the infinite power of God. He does not repeat himself, but in phrase after phrase keeps adding to the thought which precedes until he has built a tower which reaches to the very heavens. Pause for a moment and note his method: first, God is able; second, God is able to do; third, God is able to do exceeding abundantly; fourth, He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all; He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. There is no room for any doubt, question or limit; it is impossible for us to ever reach the end of, or find a limit to, that for which we may legitimately pray. How manifold is the wisdom of God and how great is the heart which distributes so liberally and fully! "Above all" seems to express everything that language can describe. David found himself in a similar predicament when, (Psa. 72:20), he wrote, "the prayers of David are ended." He had come to a stopping point and was speechless. Anyone who is caught in the grip of a powerful emotion finds himself similarly placed. There comes a time when communion and prayer fills us with inspired language and then having spoken, we are limp and exhausted and quietly worship. Paul is now speechless as he thinks about the infinity of God. Every Christian should come to that point of exaltation where, having prayed in confidence that prayers will be answered he asks that God's will be done and remains quiet in confident adoration. We all come to the point where prayers are a last resort. They should be first. Rise above the temptation to make of prayer a last resort. Do not wait until (II Cor. 1:8) "we are pressed above strength." Rise to superb heights as we seek God's gifts.

GOD CHALLENGES.

That we ask or think: There is quite a distinction between what we do, what we ask for in our prayers, and what we think of asking, but for lack of faith never seek. God understands our thoughts as well as our words and deeds. The challenge of these words however, is that God is so powerful that there is no legitimate request or any proper thought that God cannot answer. Let us, therefore, form the habit of making our thoughts concrete. Parents teach their children to be definite; when a Congressman seeks the will of his client, he wishes very definite information as to what will help his constituency. When we approach the throne of grace, let us be definite.

The nature of our requests will be governed largely by our knowledge of the Scripture and by the leading of the Holy Spirit. How can one who does not know his Bible ask for that which is pleasing to God and beneficial to himself? God is able to do all things but He is not going to do that which is foolish. No good thought can enter the mind which is too high for God to fulfill. Carey expresses it perfectly, "Expect great things from God." God is not going to do the impossible, but much that seems impossible to us is possible to Him. Satan tempted Christ to turn stone into bread or to cast Himself from a pinnacle. This was a temptation, not a reasonable request to glorify God. We will not go into the question of the form or scope of prayer other than to say, that it has not entered into the heart of man to conceive that for which he should pray. We ask for so many things which are worthless, useless, temporary and, failing to receive them, we have exaggerated fears, increasing doubts and lasting despair.

What should we ask God for? We should certainly ask for the things that Christ intimated were gifts from God, deliverance from guilt, forgiveness of sin, renewal of spiritual contact with God. "Ye have not because ye ask not." "If the church is a failure, it is the church's failure not God's." Thinking well and asking correctly are steps but not conclusions. Our cooperation is absolutely essential. God works through human instrumentality; we are to ask

God in faith and then begin living as though the answer were already within our possession. We might be surprised to see to what amazing degrees our faith will be rewarded. Certain cults, which have received surprising beneficial results in the cure of physical suffering, have based their appeal and their success entirely upon faith. God has the power but He wants us to ask Him to demonstrate it in us; He wants us to believe that He is going to demonstrate it in us, and He wants us to live as though He *had* demonstrated it in us.

A MIGHTY POWER.

According to the power: Here we find a repetition of a previous thought that Divine power is inestimable. It is limited only by our unwillingness to be channels through which it can flow. Paul was successful because he yielded himself. "I . . . labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily (Col. 1:29)." Every Christian and every church is to be a practical demonstration of God's power to serve, God's power to keep from falling and God's power to lift above the physical world into spiritual realms. Outside of ourselves we are to apply this unlimited power within ourselves. The ascended Lord can be an indwelling Christ working within us for goodness, truth, and righteousness. We cannot understand or comprehend this power but we are not to hesitate to apply it. Our daily thought should be "Lord, do with me as Thou wilt; demonstrate Thy power through *me*." God will never fail to answer such a prayer. It was D. L. Moody who said that the power of God never having been demonstrated in any individual, it was his purpose to give it the opportunity.

The world is familiar with the physical power of God. We cannot live without coming into daily contact with the power of gravity, the spread of light, the movement of heat, the reality of electricity, the attraction of the sun, the regularity of the stellar universe. But these are but paths to lead us to God's greatest power in the moral realm. However, God's power may be demonstrated in the movement of a comet or the inflow of a tide or the passing of seasons,

it has not reached its perfection until it is applied toward sin, until it takes away my guilt, until it removes my prejudices, hatreds and human limitations. The power of God is exhibited in the infinite patience with which He deals with us, waiting for us to acknowledge Him as Savior, instead of punishing us according to our deeds.

THE CHANNEL FOR HIS POWER.

That worketh in us: God does not create for the pleasure of demonstrating His power. He has made everything for man's comfort and practical use. His power is wasted unless it changes us—unless it inspires our thought, conduct, and life and opens the door into the fulness of His love. His power is to work in us, bringing our experiences into harmony with His great purposes. He coordinates His limitless power with our personality to accomplish that which He purposed before the founding of the world. Strange as it may seem, His power is not only limited by our personality but is rendered inactive by ourselves. The whole scope of Divine capacity may work in us. Christ said, "Greater is he that is in you than is in the world." Are we co-operating with Him or does our indifference or obstinence frustrate His plan? What He has done in the past is a promise of what He can do in the future. Those that have been changed by Him are prophetic concerning those that can be changed. Only those who have given themselves to Him are able to sing this doxology with feeling or sincerity. Let us not only turn our eyes toward God, but "also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily (Col. 1:29)."

XXI.

ETERNAL PRAISE

"Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." —EPH. 3:21.

THE OFFERING.

Unto him be glory: Again the Father is the Object of the eternal glory described. It is He who has done, who does and who will continue to do everything for the lost world. There is no room for personal self-glorification. Even the glory given to Christ is but glory derived from the Father who is the demonstrated example of absolute perfection. The purpose of this doxology is to glorify God. Christ repeatedly affirmed, "Thine is the glory" — "He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord." "Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever." We praise the glory of an incorruptible God (Rom. 1:23); this glory always surrounds the presence of God (Psa. 8:1); when the tabernacle was finished, the glory of God was in the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34). We are His temple and His glory is to envelop us. Does it so appear? "Let Him be praised and let His glory be acknowledged." "We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus." "We are complete in Him." Glory always surrounds not only the eternal presence of God but also those who are His messengers. "The glory of the Lord shone round about them and they were sore afraid (Luke 2:9)." The shepherds were filled with fear when they saw the glory. The children of Israel were afraid when they beheld the glory of the Lord in the cloud (Ex. 16:10). The children of Israel bowed their faces to the cloud in the Temple; the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord (I Kings 8:11). David felt that the glory of God could not be confined within a temple made with hands. He saw the whole universe pointing to God. "The heavens declare the glory of God:

and the firmament sheweth his handywork (Psa. 19:1)." The sincere believer may ask, "How can I give glory to God? Nature demonstrates His beauty but how about me? The delicate wing of a butterfly illustrates the glory of God; the song of the nightingale praises Him; the distant glory of the stars honors the hand of the Creator, but how can I glorify Him who has made all things and given me life?" This is something we do not need to understand. Our praise of Him adds to the glory which is His already and may be blessed by Him to cause others to acknowledge His eternal glory and add their praises to the testimony of the universe. Let us praise Him.

THE SPHERE.

In the church: The church is the living body of Christ; the members of the church compose the body of the redeemed which are brought into being by His grace and in whom is manifested the beauty, grace, power and goodness of God. The church was chosen by Him; she is glorified by Him; she lives by His strength. This church is the universal church composed of Jew and Gentile in which the Spirit of God dwells. "The tabernacle of God is with men." This church was established for perpetual demonstration of God's wisdom and power to save from sin. We point those seeking the glory of God to the church, whose glory depends upon the consecrated lives of believers. It may be scarred by sin but still it shines like gold in the ore. As the saving and cleansing power of Christ is applied, the church gradually becomes the channel through which His glory is demonstrated and His love is made manifest. It was God in the church who confused the powers of Rome. They were looking with suspicious eyes at those who claimed to be followers of Christ. It seemed impossible that a small band of disciples could ever break the power of Rome, yet Rome's rulers and statesmen lived to see that humble group which pressed along the Appian Way to Rome, enter Cæsar's household,

spread throughout the far stretches of that vast empire, and by the Cross triumph over the sword.

THE MEDIUM.

By Jesus Christ: As the church is the vehicle by which the glory of God is to be demonstrated, Christ is the abiding presence of His glory. There has been discussion as to whether the preposition "in" or "by" should be used; those who translate "in Christ Jesus" say that in Him, that is, in His work and person, we receive God's grace which flows through Him to us; those who translate the verse "by Jesus Christ" see Christ the Head of the body and the foundation of the living church as an indwelling influence in the heart of every believer. True disciples live, move and have their being in Him, and glorify God in proportion as the only begotten Son and express image of His person is manifest in them. Jesus is the Agent who secures the glory of the church. We owe everything to Christ. If there had been no Christ there would have been no church. The glory of the church is the glory of Christ; the church endures because Christ is everlasting. The church lives for the purpose of making Christ known; she has no glory apart from Him. No organization, no discipline or influence can take the place of the glory which shines only with the presence of Christ. He talks to us and we talk to Him. Perfect unity will eventually exist—the unity is of one body. Christ and the church are to be synonymous terms, both of them constituting the eternal glory of God. "And he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne (Zech. 6: 13)." The glory of God was shining on the face of Christ at the moment of transfiguration. "His face did shine as the sun and his raiment was white as the light (Matt. 17: 2)." This glory now shines through the faces of those who admit Christ into their hearts and lives. We shall never see the glory of God or experience the glory of God until we have Christ within us. The church cannot be glorified until Christ is exalted.

ETERNAL IN DURATION.

Throughout all ages, world without end: Paul again uses this superlative expression to describe eternity. Some translate here "generations of the age of ages." When we speak of eternity or an eternity of ages or age after age, we say a great deal and yet nothing. Eternity is made up of ages, dispensations and generations. When Abraham spoke of eternity he was thinking of a segment of time that is now past history. Yet when we speak of eternity we are no nearer to it than Abraham. The Scriptures sometimes express eternity in single form and again in plural; in the latter it emphasizes endless ages succeeding ages. We add to our years, we pyramid wealth but we can never demonstrate eternal ages. Genesis speaks of a generation as being a hundred years (15:16). Generations are mentioned as being from thirty to one hundred years. Eternity is an endless succession of generations. Throughout all eternity God is to be praised. Nothing less than eternity could describe the glory which belongs to the Godhead or tell the story of man's redemption. It takes all eternity to understand God and absorb His gifts. Eternity is an absolute necessity. It is impossible in this brief earthly life for us to even touch the wonder of God. We need to live forever with God, in order to begin to understand His mercy and love and glory. We must live forever in order to praise Him for the gift of Christ. Endless ages are required to manifest His glory to those He has made. "His name shall endure forever." Men shall be blessed in Him, all nations shall call Him blessed (Gal. 1:5; Phil. 4:20; I Tim. 1:17; II Tim. 4:18). Just as the glory of the sun is neither enhanced nor diminished by the song of a bird, so the glory of God is neither increased nor lessened by man's praise or curse.

Amen: This is a Hebrew adverb frequently translated "surely." "So be it, O Lord (Jer. 11:5)." "Blessed be the Lord for evermore. Amen and Amen (Psa. 89:52)." The Old Testament counterpart of this verse is Psa. 106:45. Let

us yield ourselves to Him and allow His fulness to fill our emptiness. Our lives should be transformed from glory to glory. As in nature we see the bud, leaf and glory of the fruit, so we should see the glory of the fully developed life—the glory of that new life in which we are changed from glory into glory by Jesus Christ. This verse concludes the first division of Paul's reasoning, in which he describes our standing as Christians. We pass now on to an understanding of our walk.

CHAPTER FOUR

I.

A PRISONER OF THE LORD

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."

—EPH. 4:1.

A PRISONER'S TESTIMONY.

I Therefore: The first three chapters of Ephesians are doctrinal, the last three chapters are intensely practical. Paul has been speaking of the Christian's standing in Christ; he now turns to the state of the Christian and his walk in daily life. The walk of the Christian must match his standing. He is a son of God and must act like one. We have been led to see the loving kindness of God toward us; we have been reviewing the wealth which belongs to every believer, and the fellowship which we have in Christ, now we are to see the union which binds us into one complete whole with Christ in the center. Our thought of Christ is to stimulate activity to conform our life to the pattern of His. All believers follow the same pattern. Fellow Christian meets in the same classroom with the same teacher.

In beginning this practical explanation of our Christian responsibility, Paul calls attention to himself in order to give weight to his words. Paul speaks from experience; his advice has been tested; walking with Jesus has taught him many valuable lessons; he finds his Christian experience a profitable one, and is anxious that others who follow with him see the dangers and pitfalls, and the glory which is to be revealed. He bases his appeal upon all he has said about his Christ. All teachers may well follow his example. Our influence depends upon our life more than upon what we say. It is possible to know a great deal

about Christ without knowing Christ very well. Paul could say, "I have seen Him on the Damascus road; He has been with me in prison, in shipwreck, in persecution; He has never failed me. In view therefore of what I know, I am appealing to you, listen carefully."

AN AMBASSADOR.

The Prisoner of the Lord: Reference to his present state is not to create sympathy for himself. Paul did not wish pity; he did, however, glory in the fact that his imprisonment was because of his loyalty to the Lord. He would never have found knowledge as a prisoner if he had not accepted Christ as his Savior; he could not have been loyal to his Savior and escaped the prison-bars. His confinement is a cause of rejoicing; he holds no bitterness against his neighbors, for he is in reality a prisoner of the Lord; he desires to do the bidding of no one else; his life is in the hands of his Master. That is the attitude we all must take—where He leads we must follow. In this trying circumstance, Paul was making the best possible use of every opportunity to testify for his Master. His Ephesian readers had freedom. Were they using this freedom to the fullest extent? Would they be willing to be made a prisoner for Christ or would they retain freedom by denying Him? Would they choose a cell rather than be free outside of Christ? If our union with Christ is real, this alternative may be presented to all of us.

Paul did not want anyone confused. His bonds were in Christ (Phil. 1:13). He was happy to know that these bonds were because of his devotion to his Master (Gal. 6:17). For anyone to sympathize for him was to fail to see the point. We must be willing to suffer for Christ and to follow Him even though it means taking up the cross. Paul's imprisonment was his letter of credential proving the genuineness of his conversion. He did not need testimonial letters of introduction or sealed papers; his imprisonment told the story. What are our credentials? Our life is going to speak of the reality of our experience. Christ sought to bring to the attention of His apostles the necessity of suffering for Him. Christ intended the Sermon on the Mount to be lived by ordinary

people among men in ordinary circumstances. Rome found it difficult to see anything in Paul which should disturb the power of Rome. Her scholars, politicians, ministers and leaders pitied the band which followed Paul, yet they lived to see the ideals of Christ tear Rome asunder. Being a prisoner of the Lord was very different from being a prisoner of Rome. To be a prisoner of Nero meant death and oblivion, but to be a prisoner of Christ meant glory to the church and eternal life to the believer. In passing, it is worthy of note that some of the world's greatest teachers, philosophers and benefactors have spent the harvest years of their lives in prison. Socrates, at seventy-two, was condemned to a prison cell and while there was forced to drink the poisoned hemlock. At seventy, Galileo was cast into one of the dark dungeons of the Inquisition where he died alone, the Pope refusing a tomb for his body in the sacred ground of the church. "If ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye."

AN EARNEST EXHORTATION.

Beseech You: We are not to interpret these words improperly. Paul was not a haranguer. He rather emphasized, exhorted, and entreated; he spoke straight from the shoulder with tremendous earnestness; he was vitally interested in lost souls. Paul knew the callousness of sin, he believed in a hell, he knew the simplicity of God's plan of salvation. Seeing so many temptations, he begged his readers to walk worthy of Christ. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service (Rom. 12:1)." This ought to be the attitude of every devout member of the church. Having been saved ourselves, we cannot sit securely in the lifeboat and see others drowning around us or hear their frantic cries for help without using every opportunity to bring them into the lifeboat with us. Sometimes with perfectly good intent, personal workers argue instead of beseeching lost souls to follow Christ. I doubt whether a soul has ever been argued into the kingdom of God.

ADVANCE STEP BY STEP.

That ye walk: The purpose of the action implied is to develop moral character and conduct. We are not to lie on flowery beds of ease in Zion; there is work to be done which takes a lifetime of effort to accomplish. How much of our days are spent in preparation. Uncompleted work will remain. But as long as the Lord gives us life we are to walk step by step thankfully, lovingly, unblamably, and happily. The word "walk" is very suggestive of the activity of the Christian's life. Walking is an almost perfect form of exercise. It brings nearly every muscle of the body into play. Everywhere, walking can be indulged in by the poorest as well as the wealthiest. In urging Christians to walk in Christ Paul is merely saying, "Your relationship to the church is a form of exercise, beneficial, invigorating and helpful." As a rule, walking is more than a pastime. We walk for a purpose; it takes us to our goal. Heaven is our spiritual objective to which each day brings us closer. Each step should bring us nearer the God we worship. In this walk let us be careful not to walk as the Pharisees—letting ceremony take the place of that for which the ceremony was a symbol. Jews are said never to walk willingly on the smallest bit of paper in their way without first examining it lest the name of God be upon it. And yet the Jews, so exacting in minor particulars, might not hesitate to rob their neighbor. Ceremony was a cloak for religion. Christ clearly taught that a person might keep the commandments perfectly, make every sacrifice, tithe honestly and perform his ceremonies faultlessly, yet be vile in heart. The clean cup is washed inside and out.

OUR VOCATION.

Worthy of the vocation: We are sons of GOD. Our vocation therefore is to walk as a son of God. "Walk honestly toward them that are without (I Thes. 4:12)." "Walk worthy of God (I Thes. 2:12)." "Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing (Col. 1:10)." We must never forget that we belong to Him and live unto God in Christ Jesus in heavenly places. Our vocation involves harmony—we are to be conformed to

the image of Christ. It implies exaltation—we are to be in the glory to be revealed in Him. It includes unity—all believers are members of one family as children of God. Our calling is high (Phil. 3:14); holy (II Tim. 1:9); heavenly (Heb. 3:1); perpetual (I Tim. 4:8); of God (Rom. 11:29). First we receive our call from God, then we follow Him, day by day gradually developing those traits of character which eventually bring forth fruits worthy of repentance and fruits proving growth in Christ-likeness and demonstrating the beauty of His Spirit within us. Our life is to be a practical demonstration of the righteousness of Christianity. Every Christian is a living example of Christ living in the world today. We are to live as Christians trusting in Christ and obeying His commands. "If ye love me, keep my commandments (John 14:15)."

Paul tells us to walk worthily. He writes like a father to a son at college. The parent knows the boy is alone for the first time, the lad must think for himself, and face temptations without the guiding hand of a parent. So parental love and wisdom cautions him—"Remember the name you bear; remember the high position of your ancestors; do not disgrace the family name; live worthy of your forebears." We are to live worthy of Christ. In the days of Tiberius it was considered a crime to carry the ring of Augustus into a promiscuous place. The emperor's friends and followers must never forget their ruler who never wanted them to be seen where he would not be seen; the ring they wore was a symbol of his ideals which must be presented in compatible surroundings. If the indwelling Christ were allowed to have His way with us, we would be protected against the dangers of contaminating influences and compromising situations. Walk worthy of the high calling in Christ Jesus the Lord. Luther counseled his followers to dispel temptation in a worldly life and tribulations by saying, "I am a Christian." He felt the repeated utterance of these words would remind them of all that Christ has stood for and the impossibility of carrying Christ into any situation involving crime, shame or misdemeanor. The International Society of Christian Endeavor chose for its 1934 motto, "I will be a Christian." Their selection of this ideal

had the same purpose which led Paul to write "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." The Roman generals used to address their troops before engaging in combat by reminding them that Rome expected every soldier to be brave. Cowardice proved that Rome was not in the heart of a soldier. The spirit of Rome and cowardliness could never keep company. So the Christian stands for Christ and heaven. A low life immediately raises the question, is this Christianity? Is this the Spirit of Christ?

THE DIVINE INVITATION.

Wherewith ye are called: We are reminded of the time when we first heard the invitation to follow Christ, to receive a place in that vast world brotherhood of believers; and to live on a plane which will some day be rewarded by sitting in heavenly places with Him: Gentiles were called to the same high privilege which had previously belonged to the highly privileged Jew; Jews and Gentiles are now to share equally in the plan of salvation. Without regard to race or previous condition of servitude, we are invited to be what God created us to be, and what through Christ we may become. Our mind is to be free from the fear of punishment. The consequences of sin are removed. We have been bought with a price; we are to be perfect even as He is perfect; we are called to follow God's plan in our life. We are not to follow some idea of our own creation; we cannot mount to heaven on any ladder of our own devising. From the foundation of the world the plan of salvation was in the mind of God, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Throughout the generations of mankind this plan has been revealed in increasing fullness and glory. There is no reason why, by the light of Scripture, we cannot understand why we were born. We came into the world to be a demonstration of God in man. Of Christ it was said, "he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Have any been drawn closer to God because of what they have seen in us? "Ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord (I Cor. 1:9)." We are to stand for that for which

Christ stood. "Walk worthy of God who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory (I Thes. 2:12)." Following Christ means the saving of our soul, the saving of our family, and the establishing of God's kingdom on earth. "God hath called us to peace (I Cor. 7:15)." We have peace with God (Rom. 5:1)." This will bring us that for which we long—"a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man (Acts 24:16)," and that crown of glory which fadeth not away, "Know that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing (I Pet. 3:9)."

II

THE EMPTYING OF SELF

"With all lowliness, and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love." —EPH. 4:2.

SELF-EFFACEMENT.

With all lowliness: We are not left in doubt as to how we can check our spiritual development. If a tree is alive we know it; there are leaves, flowers, and fruit. If it is dead we soon discover that fact. If we are walking worthy of Christ certain characteristics will manifest themselves, Christian graces will appear. One of the first will be lowliness of spirit, which will include all and every possible form of genuine humility. Lowliness is an uneffected lowly estimate of ourselves. The Pagan world never mentioned it; they were self-complacent. Self was elevated. The Christian is cautioned to "be not wise in your own conceits (Rom. 12:16)." While we seek high things, the closer we come to God the more lowly will be our attitude. As we think of the hopeless debt which He has so completely forgiven, a great humility will overwhelm us. Lowliness is more of a New Testament virtue than one of the Old Testament. The Graeco-Roman world did not recognize it; the Christian world placed it along side of faith, hope, and love. The "more we know the providences of God, the more we know of Christ, the more we will say with Christ, "For I am meek and lowly (Matt. 11:29)." The early church "served the Lord with all humility of mind (Acts 20:19)." It was lowliness that caused Paul to write to the Corinthians, "I am the least of the apostles (I Cor. 15:9)." He was thinking of Christ who "made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant (Phil. 2:7; Col. 2:18-23; I Pet. 5:5). Lowliness has been spoken of as low-mindedness or an unselfish, humble estimate of ourselves. No one who sees the fields white for harvest, no one

who has prayer answered, and no one who has seen one guided into the Light can walk in other than lowly fashion. It is not we but God who worketh in us; we can save no one, but God working through us can. To Him be all praise and glory.

QUIET WAITING.

And Meekness: Meekness and lowliness go hand in hand. They have much in common. Meekness is always gentle; it is submissive under trial and persecution; it turns the other cheek; it goes the second mile; under unjust accusation its answer is soft, mild and gentle. When there is much reason for complaint, meekness is uncomplaining; it bears the faults and injuries of others without resentment or irritation. It is gentle under provocation, it submits to the will of God unquestioningly; it knows that only the grace of God can cause meekness to blossom. We need to think frequently of Christ in the Passion Week, of the Cross and its meaning for us, if we are ever to attain the goal which is set before us. Simplicity of spirit and devout yielding come from God. How meekly David bore the cursing of Shimei, because he felt "it may be that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing (II Sam. 16:12)!" Trench defines meekness as "more than gentleness of manner; it is a grace in advance of holiness not as more precious than it, but presupposing it and as being unable to exist without it." It is (II Cor. 10:1) the gentleness of Christ; it is simple heartedness, submissive under trial in any form; it is present before the will of God which serves the Lord with all humility of mind (Acts 20:19), and (2:3) and in lowliness of mind esteems others better than ourselves. This loving submissiveness to God and quiet repentance, this mildness of disposition and obliteration of self in spite of apparent provocation is the contrary of rough retort and the crude retaliation which our sinful natures stir. Meekness is a gift of God. "Be clothed with humility God giveth grace to the humble (I Pet. 5:5)." A missionary in Jamaica once asked a boy, "Who are the meek?" "Those who give soft answers to rough questions," answered the boy.

WITH LONGMINDEDNESS.

With longsuffering: Longsuffering and forbearance are twin virtues. Both oppose desire to retaliate an injury or offense. If we are longsuffering we dare not harbor the spirit of revenge. We must exercise patience at all times, have peace in mind and heart, get the long view of life and suppress the anger which rises to the surface (II Cor. 6:6; Gal. 3:22; Col. 3:12). Longsuffering implies the ability to endure. We run spiritual marathons rather than fifty-yard dashes and need second-wind for the race which is set before us. Be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless. . . . The longsuffering of our Lord is salvation (II Pet. 3:14, 15)." A great deal of suffering in the world is caused by neglect, injustice and the fact that others are imperfect like ourselves. We must always follow the Spirit of Christ's command. "He that is without sin let him cast the first stone." Christ, on the Cross, cherished no ill will toward those who were glaring malignantly at Him. When patience is sorely tried, let our tormenters know the meaning of self restraint through our example. The greatest lessons of life will be missed unless we have longsuffering. We might classify the various causes of longsuffering with definite profit. We are to endure the wrongs inflicted by men (Isa. 45:15; Jer. 15:15). But whatever might be the provocation a Christian must bear this cross without retaliation (II Tim. 4:2). We must exhibit longsuffering if we are to be counted worthy by Christ (Rom. 2:4; 9:22). Paul practiced longsuffering (I Tim. 1:16). God is as longsuffering to us as he was in the days of Noah (I Pet. 3:20). Let us follow Christ's example and command and remove these shortcomings which necessitate longsuffering on the part of God.

MUTUAL RESTRAINT.

Forbearing one another: The Christian has ability to suffer greatly; he keeps himself in check; he is able to stand without flaring, what is personally offensive both in word and deed. He does not do this as the Stoic who endured pain to

develop his character. He does it imitating the Spirit of Christ. A quick burst of temper may drive a soul to perdition. The wise fisherman does not always jerk the line whenever he feels a nibble; the wise fisherman of souls may lose the prize by impatience and lack of restraint. Forbearance includes fellow Christians as well as those of the world. A great deal that mars our happiness will come from those who profess to be followers of Christ. We must keep from being too sensitive of slights; we must realize that others are very likely thinking of us in the same terms with which we think of them and if we wish them to be lenient with us we must exhibit the same grace toward them. In the name of Christ it is possible to bear injustice with dignity. "Ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise (II Cor. 11:19)." Regardless of what others may do to us we are "to do good to all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith (Gal. 6:10)." Forbearance is given an opportunity to display itself when others intentionally or unintentionally provoke us to anger by direct affront or by their desire to retaliate. Forbearance is the opposite of getting even or paying back in kind. In the name of Christ we do not let people and events get on our nerves. Injury, perjury and vicious attacks are to be borne quietly with a prayer that God may turn their heart; we forgive them for their injustice, thinking of God's mercy to us and desiring above all to lead them to the light. We are to walk forbearing one another.

OUR MOTIVE IN CONDUCT.

In love: The spirit which will produce lowliness, meekness, longsuffering and forbearance is love. Nothing else will cause us to be willing to live in this fashion. Our love for Christ will cause us to do a lot that our love for each other could not compel us to do. Human love frequently breaks under the stress and strain of life, but God's love taking possession of our love changes it and gives it stability. "Love beareth all things, endureth all things." The spirit of Christ must walk in us. (Eph. 5:2). If we find it is impossible to do what Paul suggests, our first step is to pray the Lord to fill

us with His love. When we think what Christ endured for our sakes and what He promises us in the present world and in the world to come, these difficult things He asks us to do are cheap prices for eternity with Him. Our salvation is a gift of God; nevertheless, we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling and exercise love, forbearance, and longsuffering. Our failures will keep us meek and lowly.

III.

ONENESS OF SPIRIT

"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." —EPH. 4:3.

WALK WORTHILY.

Endeavoring to keep: The earthly walk of the Christian sets him apart from the rest of his fellows. He has the example of Christ, God's gift of the Holy Spirit, and the assurance that his heart is a temple of God. But this does not insure him against temptation nor does it lift him above danger of sinning nor guarantee that difficulties will disappear once a decision has been made to follow Christ. Paul warns those who have recently found Christ to look for dangers which lie ahead. They will always need to earnestly strive to keep the Spirit they have received. They must exert every energy, give unceasing diligence, never become indifferent, cool or relax their vigilance. Satan has much for idle hands to do. The parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins illustrates the struggle to keep life dedicated to Christian service. Preserve our vision, keep watchful care over it. We dare not assume that because we feel Christ's love in our hearts, it will continue to remain of its own accord with no further effort on our part. We must exhibit constant and persistent effort. Give earnest diligence lest we lose our prize. The Spirit of Christ is a gift which becomes more useful as we apply it day by day.

Paul is reminding the church at Ephesus that harmony can be created. There had been discord in the church of Galatia and Corinth. The Jews and Gentiles with their different religious background found it difficult to keep unity, or, in the words of Jude, "to keep themselves in the love of God." If they failed to have this spirit of harmonious relationship, it would be very difficult for Paul to preach forgiveness or for the church to extend its membership and influ-

ence. If, on the other hand, they yielded to each other, exercising lowliness of mind, meekness and longsuffering, unity could progress and gradually be felt. More was to be done than refrain from doing those things which develop into disturbances. Unity can never be achieved by merely letting matters alone. It is furthered by avoiding the source of division or strife, refusing deliberate efforts to antagonize, and purposing never to be the leader or member of a faction. Unity must first be considered valuable. They who wish it must not only be eager to have it in the church, but must also seriously guard what little unanimity exists—when it is broken, reestablishing it; when there seems to be danger of losing it, reuniting it. Value it as something without which success cannot be permanent.

Unity is like a plant; it has its minute beginning followed by its growth into strong and sturdy power; it is watered by personal sacrifice, humility, and surrendered ambitions; it lives in the sunshine of Christ's blessings. The church has found it difficult to maintain the spirit of unity when some disagree theologically or desire to modernize the Creed or interpret the Parable in modern phraseology. Fundamentals will always be fundamentals and upon these agreement can be reached. Religion is the one point around which all should unite in their worship of God. A common desire to show the Spirit of Christ does away with the gap between slave and freeman, between rich and poor, cultured and uncultured, Jew and Gentile.

ONE IN CHRIST.

The unity of the spirit: Unity has been variously defined. Probably the word "one-ness" describes it. A group has union in feeling and name even though each member of the circle possesses different temperaments and ideas. The word "unity" occurs only twice in the Bible in the sense in which Paul uses it here; the other reference is in the thirteenth verse where faith in Christ is spoken of as the cord which binds us to each other. Through faith in Christ we possess the Holy Spirit. A common desire to please Him gives us common purpose and feeling. No other power can make

us one. Forms of religion frequently cause disputes. No one ceremony satisfies all in their desire to worship God. While creeds have much in common, they differ in points which are apt to split the church. When we speak about our faith in Christ, about our desire to live acceptably to Him, we find disagreements being eliminated. All need Him. Our contact with Him is a real and vital experience. The word Christian is more important than the name of any denomination. Our faith in Him gives that inward strength which enables us to live with courage and hope. Paul therefore stresses the importance of putting first things first. When the church is formed, the officers have a duty to maintain unity through faith in Christ which is to be the governing principle.

As we follow Christ's spirit in building unity, we do not surrender any principle, conviction or remain silent on points of conscience. We can be plain spoken, honest, sincere and scriptural and still speak "truth in love." But woe if we depart from the simplicity of the Gospel. This desired unity is found in sharing a common life. It is demonstrated by gathering about one Cross; its power is the Holy Spirit. Others recognize it by mutual forbearance, love for the sake of Christ, unity of forgiveness, overlooking and praying for the one-ness of mind possessed by Christ in the heavenly Father, "that the same mind might be in you which was in Christ Jesus"; "be of the same mind one to another." Both individually and collectively we forget this. Discord, complaint, heart-yearnings, jealousies and prejudices form a veritable Pandora box of evil. The unity of the Christian church is the hope of the world. It is impossible to ritualize it, memorialize it, or legislate it. We find it only at the foot of the Cross. Christianity becomes a power only when we exhibit the spirit of unity. How can the heathen be won by divisions within the church?

Unity is power. Single drops of water cannot exert very much influence, but gather them into a rainbow and they are a thing of beauty; place them close together in a cataract and power is generated to turn the wheels of industry; place them in a pool and they act as a mirror to reflect the beauties of a God-made world; fling them from the prow of an ocean going

vessel and they bring new life to weary passengers. By unity in different forms you have beauty, power, heat and health. So with the Spirit of Christ. The same Spirit expresses itself variously in the life of the believers. Yet when you take a group of believers you find a comradeship and a fellowship which enables them to triumph over difficulties and rise resplendent, clothed with the might of Christ Himself. Prayer, peace and cooperation in work bring a sense of solidarity to the church enabling it to triumph over the wrecks of time. In the early days of Greece a group of friends bound themselves together in what was known as the "sacred battalion." Remarkable feats of valor were performed by these men who stood for a common purpose and faced every danger shoulder to shoulder; their exploits brought terror to their enemies. The church is the "sacred battalion"; its members are bound together in a common love for Christ Who died on the Cross that we might live. The risen Christ gives them power to triumph over evil. Unity of the Spirit is like the harmony of a great orchestra. Many instruments play various parts and yet all produce a quality of tone which is pleasing and inspiring. Let Christians think of the church as a great symphonic orchestra with Christ as the Leader. We play our part, our neighbor plays his. The leader brings out the best in each, directing the time when we shall be heard and producing a harmony in heaven and peace on earth.

UNITY MUST BE COMPLETE.

In the bond: The Greek word for "bond" is sometimes translated "sinew." A sinew keeps various parts of the human body knitted together and properly joined. It must be living tissue or death results. As soon as it loses its vital characteristics it not only dies but the body dies. Any injury to it not only impairs its own usefulness but the usefulness of the whole body. Christ speaks of the living church as being His body. The unity of the Holy Spirit is the sinew which binds together the body of believers. Any discord, disagreement, or enmities within the church must receive immediate treatment or its characteristics will spread throughout the organization

known as the church. Neglect, an angry word, an unfair retort, a selfish purpose, an unsympathetic attitude leaves an indelible mark.

Another suggestion is offered by this bond which binds us. No matter what happens or when it happens or who may be the cause of its happening, whether it seems just or fair, we must never lose sight of the fact that we are joined to Christ and spiritual solidarity comes only from Him. We cannot have peace unless we get rid of discord; we cannot have a bushel of apples if the basket is half filled with stones. Peace is the bond which unites us and keeps us united, a peace which is secured by the actual presence of Christ (Phil. 2:3, 4). A living Christ ministers to our living souls. Let us not insult or grieve this living Spirit. Leave no stone unturned to unite division. If we make peace with each other and walk in His peace, unity will supplant discord.

STABILITY.

Of peace: Various prepositions might be used here; we might say that the bond is peace or that the bond comes by peace or it is the bond of peace. Again we may say that this peace is reconciliation with God. It follows walking with Christ. It comes after we have forgiven that we may be forgiven. We may never experience it until we meet Him face to face. Peace of the heart like Gibraltar stands undisturbed by the assaults, temptations and ills of the world. It is like a knot incapable of being untied. It is like a treaty written with a hope of peace in the heart and signed without mental reservations. It is a lasting peace, not an armistice. Colossians (3:15) indicates that peace is like an umpire deciding the issues of our heart, and always ruling with the intent of keeping us from division. Unity must be maintained and love expressed. There must never be any separation from God or harsh feeling or diverted eyes or cold attitudes or unfriendly gestures or looking away from or lack of cordial relationship. When we accept Christ a new life is given us, a capacity to

live as sons of God with reverence for Him and peace towards men. The beautiful flowers blooming in the meadow make no clamor as they unfold their petals to the sun and give their fragrance to the gentle breezes. They blossom, and by beauty and quiet tell others of their presence. Christ-likeness and absorption of the Life Divine witness to the reality of Christian experience.

How are we to attain it? Abandon striving, cease boasting, esteem others as better than ourselves, avoid giving and taking offense, be the one to stop rather than to start contention, be pure in heart and motive. (Rom. 15:33; II Cor. 13:11). It is a peace which must belong to every successful and genuine Christian. It is the only thing which can cause the church to live triumphantly. It alone can keep the spiritual family happy and healthy. "Love one another even as I also have loved you." At the battle of Trafalger, Lord Nelson saw two of his commanding officers in a bitter dispute. The battle depended upon whole-hearted cooperation. Approaching them he commanded them to forget their differences, shake hands and be friends. Then pointing to the horizon he said, "Yonder are your enemies." This is Christ's message to the church of today, "Forget your differences, the fields are white for the harvest." As co-workers with Christ we are to fight spiritual battles against the common enemy, Sin.

IV.

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." —EPH. 4:4.

ONE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

There is one body: The word "one" is emphasized. Notice how frequently Paul repeats it. Seven qualities define the church. The first of these is oneness of body. Of course this is the unexplainable, mystical and spiritual body of Christ with which every believer has fellowship. The church of Christ is the visible body of this living Christ. It has one author—God; one head—Christ; one Spirit—the Holy Spirit; one destination—heaven; one rule of conduct—faith in Christ. In our life we are to recognize this mystical union with Christ. We cannot have union with ourselves until we have union with Christ. The church lives because of the risen Savior, the object of faith (Col. 1:24; Rom. 12:5; I Cor. 10:16). Christ created this church in order to demonstrate to an evil world the reality of His spirit. In the church, the President of the United States and his chauffeur can sit side by side and worship their God; in this church, the mistress of the home and her maid can feel no differences between them. Our common woes, perplexities, fears and trials have a common antidote. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.

SPIRITUAL UNITY.

And one Spirit: This Spirit is the Holy Spirit; it is the Divine, indwelling Spirit which effects union between believers; it is responsible for growth in the lives of the individual or the church; it inspires, animates, admonishes and preserves. Without Christ we would be like grains of sand, but with Christ we become like atoms of steel in a hammer. He unites

us firmly and through us demonstrates His power among men. There is one body and one Spirit, because Christ is the Head of this body and a body cannot be divided against itself. There cannot be war between various members of a body. The brain, the fingers, the feet, and all separate parts of the body work in harmony. The church is ruled by one Spirit, the Holy Spirit. This is the secret of its power. God's Spirit was given to make us holy and keep us united with each other. Pieces of metal must first be cleansed before they can be united securely. Fear must be removed from the church. Perfect friendship cannot exist while there is sin in the life. The church should continually examine herself lest Pharisaical characteristics develop. The family faces discord when this Divine Spirit is absent. Some constantly face a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde within themselves. Pray that God may reveal His Spirit, and apply its cleansing power within.

When our hearts are filled with the love of Christ we are like a meadow carpeted by flowers and plants of every hue. Their nature and life is in the common soil, but how manifold is their expression of life! A dozen people read the same chapter; how differently they interpret it and yet how satisfying to their individual spiritual necessities. The important fact is, are we feeding upon Him? Is He our all and in all? "In essentials—unity, in doubtful questions—liberty, in all things—charity." We are to seek truth in Christ and finding it retain it as a personal possession.

EVEN ME!

Even as ye are called: Emphasis can be variously placed in this verse. It is like turning a searchlight upon a great building. The light cannot reveal all at once. We were called long before we were born and yet we actually hear the call when we agree to follow Him. This invitation is a personal matter. We are called to be saved. We are "called in one body (Col. 3:15)." This is a "high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14)." We are called to seek those things which are above, to live pure, tender and noble lives, to manifest the mercies of God, to regard His desires and make Christian character a thing of beauty. We are called to unity of service. "Go ye

into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Our message is, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved and he that believeth not shall be damned (Mark 16:16)." "We love Him because He first loved us." We love the world filled with sin because He loved it and was willing to die for it. We find pleasure in this service. It is not an irksome, distasteful and exhausting task, but stimulating, productive of returns and happiness. We are called to worship one God, one Christ, and one Spirit.

OUR SALVATION.

In one hope: Paul was undoubtedly thinking of the hope of redemption, the consequences of sin, and salvation through Christ, the Messiah (Col. 1:4, 27; I Tim. 1:1; Eph. 1:18). What a bond of union is this, that all saved by the blood of Christ shall share the blessings of heaven and eternity stretching out forever and ever. This common hope should make us willing to bear the trials of today and perform any duties assigned us. If this cannot draw the church together nothing will. Heartaches, separation, conflict lose their importance and almost their reality as we lift our eyes to the heavens and yield ourselves to Him. How unimportant is our problem in relation to eternity. Think of the glory that is to be revealed in us and take courage. Paul tells Christians of his day and believers of all time to get away from self and contemplate Christ sitting on the throne of God whenever life seems unbearable, and longing for freedom and feeling it impossible to carry on, matters seem to have come to the breaking point. Think of this body as a temporary shelter soon to be discarded to release the soul for its permanent work. Our hope, which lures us on, our hope which gives us the fighting spirit, and endurance, which takes possession of us and lures us onward, is Christ's promise, "I go to prepare a place for you that where I am there ye may be also." This hope binds us together on earth and frees us from fear of death. Unless we are united on earth we cannot be united in heaven. The church has unity in one body, one spirit, and one hope. Do we have this hope? Do we cherish resurrection for ourselves as well as for a loved one who has gone before? Do we

know that if God can help another to overcome a fault, He will give us the victory? If any child of yesterday possessed a God who was their all and in all, we too can have this same God who is no respecter of persons.

GOD SPEAKS TO ME.

Of your calling: As we read our Bible, God talks to us. His church has endured because its members of all time have believed with all their heart, mind and soul that they have actually heard His voice saying, "Come unto Me and be ye saved." This invitation carries the power with it of taking away our sin. Old things are put away, all things become new. His love, tender, kind and abundant, beautifies and alters my sinful self. This voice from heaven calling the sinner toward the throne of grace has an irresistible appeal. It is so hopeful, so tender, so loving. Jesus is tenderly calling me home. "I will arise and go to my Father." With my eyes fixed upon Him, there will be little inclination or opportunity to be carried away by temptations or sin. Jesus calls us over the tumult to unity and peace (Isa. 2:24; 11:9-13; Zeph. 3:9; Zech. 14:9).

In one sense this calling comes from the Father. Heaven is for all who believe in the Son. The call comes through the Son. The Holy Spirit calls us to feel its power and be kept as earthly, living acceptable members of the body of which Christ is the Head. This calling is high (Phil 3:14); it is holy (II Tim. 1:9); it is heavenly (Heb. 3:1). It carries with it an obligation to walk worthily, differently, and lovingly. This calling implies reception of the gift of Christ, a change in our inward nature, and removal of that sin which retards the work of the Spirit and separates us from Christ. Our calling is characterized by walking in the grace of the Holy Spirit. Others recognize our divine calling. Caesar's household knew that Paul was led by an unknown God who was God of Gods; his life was the outward manifestation of his inward hope. As we look upward the Light may be reflected from us to others. Let us not forget this threefold method of unity in the church: First, an inward transformation, second, an outward manifestation, third, an upward gaze.

V.

A THREEFOLD UNITY.

"One Lord, one faith, one baptism." —EPH. 4:5.

THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN UNITY.

One Lord: Paul stresses the unity of the Christian church lest members forget that in Christ divisions which separate may be removed by a common love for Him, and constant intimate fellowship with believers. All nations, all elements of society, all types of character are brought to a common level in Christ. This meant more to the early church than it does to us. The gladiators and senators, servants and masters, patricians and prisoners of Rome had no common meeting ground except as they knelt side by side in worship of the Lord.

The word "Lord" expresses ownership, authority, and rulership. We have been bought with a price (Col. 3:22, 24). Creeds separate us, but our Lord unites us. We become one in Him, the Head of the living body, the church, the Master of each soul, and the Ruler who has a right to command our thoughts and our actions. The church can be united only when it universally acknowledges this single Sovereign. He owns us, body and soul. As Hodge says, "Our reason is subject to His teaching, our conscience to His commands, our hearts and lives to His control." As believers we are anxious to do His bidding and pledge unwavering loyalty to His wishes (I Cor. 6:20; I Pet. 1:17). The Old Testament had its Jehovah, the New Testament has its Lord (Rom. 14:9), Lord of the living and of the dead; a Lord who is Master of death and lives in the hearts of all believers, drawing to Himself all who believe on Him and by the magnetism of His love joining them into an inseparable fellowship. Thinking of Him is our only hope of salvation; if we confess Him, He acknowledges our faith and intrusts us with the great

task of winning others to Him. On this point Christianity differs from other religions. We have one Lord, our attention is not divided between many powers and persons contending among themselves for supremacy (I Cor. 8:5, 6). We have one Lord who reigns over the church; He and He alone has a right to control us. From Him we receive the confidence of hope and in Him we see a manifestation of the Father.

SAVING FAITH.

One faith: There are many creeds, but only one faith and act by which men are joined to God. Every Christian trusts a common Savior; and reaches out toward God. We see in Christ our all and in all; there is nothing we desire in Him that is not found in Him. We trustfully accept His promises and this faith brings us access to the Father and unites us to the Lord. This faith is the most real and vital part of our religious experience. It is as personal as anything that we have found, a personal faith in a personal Savior. He gives the invitation, "come unto me," and our heart willingly obeys. We see in this invitation our only method of salvation and the only path along which Jew and Gentile may travel together to find union with Him (Rom. 3:20). This faith takes us from sin and our lost condition toward Christ and in Christ provides that faith which enabled Paul to say, "I have kept the faith (II Tim. 4:7)." Christ cannot take away the sins of the past, remove us from the world or give us the victory until we have this faith and are obedient to it (Acts 6:7). Faith is the starting-point of our Christian belief; we cannot progress through purity, we cannot receive salvation, we do not acknowledge the Scriptures as the Word of God nor follow their injunctions, nor do we see Jesus the Divine Son of God until faith reaches out. This faith is always faith in a person, not faith in a creed. No amount of repetitions of a familiar creed can save us. Though we cannot define faith, it is none the less real. We are certain that Christ is our all in all; we are willing to trust our life and our eternity to His hands. The early apostles said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus

Christ and thou shalt be saved.” They did not analyze this belief. Sometimes we become too methodical in our analyses, we over-stress ceremonies, we are anxious to have all believers occupy a common form with ourselves and voice their faith in identical terms. This effort is apt to terminate in schism and division. If we keep our eyes on Christ rather than on His teachers, we will be so filled with adoration and enthusiasm for Him as to have no desire to do what the Pharisees so frequently did, engage in profitless discussions on the meaning and importance of words and phrases. Someone has very aptly said that the differences in our beliefs are like two frowning cliffs which face each other—between them is a narrow gorge but both rest upon the same rock foundation.

THE VISIBLE SEAL OF UNITY.

One baptism: Let us make no mistake in interpreting one baptism. The immersion group quotes this verse as being a conclusive proof that all other forms of baptism are in reality not baptisms. Immersion is the only Scriptural form, there is but one baptism. Paul does not mention the mode of baptism. He is speaking of the act of baptism as being the first public step taken by a believer. The rite is a visible, outward badge of fellowship in Christ. The one baptised is telling the world that he has forsaken it, he accepts Christ and becomes by baptism an intricate part of the living body of Christ. Our faith in the common Lord insists upon baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. By this rite we become partakers of the covenant relation and receive remission of sins in the name of Christ (Matt. 28:19). Baptism is based on faith in one Lord (Acts 2:38). Baptism does not save; there is nothing in the water to cleanse sin. Water is a symbol telling what God does through His Holy Spirit. We humble ourselves and by the rite let the world know that we possess a saving faith and recognize the power of Christ's death, burial and resurrection in ourselves. In the Old Testament dispensation, circumcision bound its followers into covenant relationship with God and each other; in the New Testament dispensation, baptism is the cord which unites us

to Christ and to each other. Water typifies cleansing by the Holy Spirit; without this spiritual baptism we are not a part of the body of Christ.

The book of Acts tells us of Simeon, who had a baptism of water but not a baptism of the Spirit. The word "baptism" used here is found also in Luke 12:50, where Christ, speaking to John the Baptist after His baptism and before His glorification says, "I have a baptism to be baptised with." He is speaking of something far more important than the use of water. The rite of baptism was taken for granted, so few references are made to it in early church history. These occasional references imply its universal observance along the lines which were familiar in Christ's time. The form certainly could not have been changed by Christ without comment or specific mention of it. Paul links faith and baptism as in Mark 16:16. Faith is that act of belief by which we are united to a common Lord and baptism is that holy sacrament by which we become a part of the living body of Christ. Do we have this baptism? It is a question not only for Simeon, but also for every member of the church. If we do not possess it, we find ourselves incapable of making any spiritual progress; we continually apply brakes to the machinery of the church. With it we become centers of confidence and power.

VI.

THE UNIVERSAL FATHERHOOD OF GOD

"One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." —EPH. 4:6.

THE ABSOLUTE DEITY.

One God: It is rather odd that Paul should name God the seventh unity to be kept. We would expect God to be listed first. We all believe in God but our belief may not save us. We need to be led from a consciousness of guilt through a saving faith in God, one who is tender, compassionate, and able to satisfy us. The word "God" suggests matchless splendor and glory. We believe in one God who is sufficient for all our needs. Heathen feel safer with many gods. There is only one true God in all eternity (John 17:3). The Jew believed on Him. The Gentile must also accept His sovereignty and acknowledge Him who through His Spirit imparts life, who through His Son assures us of eternal life, and who because of faith lavishes upon us His boundless wealth. This one God is the source of all spiritual unity. Whenever we find ourselves getting into argumentative difficulties we obtain consolation in knowing one God sits on the throne who is Judge of all. He sits there in majesty (Isa. 6:5, 7). We, with Ezekiel, fall prostrate before him (Ezek. 2:23), and, with Daniel (8:27), feel breathless as we contemplate the magnificence of God. The more we know Him the more we want with John, the writer of Revelation, to fall at his feet (Rev. 1:17).

SOURCE OF REDEMPTION.

And Father of all: We are to honor God by our loving obedience to Him. He is our affectionate, tender, gracious, condescending Father. Every believer sees in Him not only generator of life, as the Creator of all, but also the regenerator

—the one who makes those who are dead in trespasses and sin alive, new creatures, and members of Christ's body (I John 5:1; Jas. 1:17, 18). As Father of all believers He is Head of a great family "of whom every family in heaven and earth is named." He is Head of the family of angels. We are interested in His Fatherhood of the earthly family. What a discordant family He must see as He looks down upon the bitterness which sometimes creeps into the church and into families who are members of that church! As brothers and sisters in Christ we are to seek that spirit of unity and harmony which comes from united worship and homage to Him. This unity can come only as we follow the example of Christ. "I came not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me (John 6:38)." Jesus did nothing of himself. He imitated His Father. Shall we do less?

There are two ways in which His children may call Him "Father." A child who has been brought up surrounded by the loving devotion of a father has an implicit trust and perfect love. When such a child says "Father," it is in terms of absolute affection. How different in tone and understanding is this child's use of the word and that of the weary prodigal who, having lived in the depths of the dregs of sin, said "I will arise and go to my father and say to him, I have sinned against heaven and before thee." God is Father to those brought up in the household of faith and those who, having tasted sin in all of its forms, are ready to turn their back upon the past and begin life anew. To each He is Father, in every sense of the word. Christ wished to convince His disciples that God, mighty as He is, was a Father to whom all His children could go with confidence. Hence He told them to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven." Only by such consideration could they develop that unity among themselves dimly comparable to that existing between Christ and His Father. When Christ was pouring out His heart (John 17) He prayed for his followers that "they might be one even as we are one." Christians need to continually express that prayer lest the beauty of the church be marred and the world see in the church something to be separated from rather than to be attached to. Our light may not be all that it should be,

but it can be definitely and perpetually a testimony to Him who alone is the Light of the world. Every believer is a child of God. Let us therefore look first to Him, the Source of our redemption, and then to each other that we may help each other over the difficulties which so easily beset us and scar the beauty of our lives on earth.

SOVEREIGN POWER.

Who is above all: It is not enough to say we believe in God; we must have a reason for the faith which is in us and become acquainted with that God and love His Son. It is not enough for a son to say, "Thank you," for the checks his father sends him; he must understand that father. Paul uses the number three to define his Father and our Father—He is above all, through all and in all. There is a question as to the meaning of the Greek word "above all" or "over all." Is the reference to things, or Christians, or both? Of course as Creator He is above all that which He has made, and glory surrounds Him because of the perfectness of His creation. "In the beginning God." Hence the sovereignty of God over all that follows. The Pantheist believes God to be over all; he sees God in the forest, the mountain, the stream, the sky. But Paul is talking about God's relation to the church; he is not thinking of creation or mankind in general. He here issues a word of warning to those in the church who become irritable under authority; to all intents and purposes he says, "Remember that God is the One we are worshiping, He is the Head of all those who have been regenerated by His Spirit." Let no man presume. We must acknowledge Him whose Spirit descends from heaven and fills us, and whose Son helps us over the rough places in life and ushers us into the presence of the Father in glory, who is above all.

DIFFUSED GRACE.

And through all: The word "all" is very important in this threefold analysis of the power of God. It is like a great in-flowing tide which fills every nook and cranny with equal fullness. This is God's way and not man's way. Man shows favoritism, God sends His blessing to all men. Jehovah never

does things by halves. When God gives, He gives to the uttermost. His Spirit pervades every part of our being; He operates in all of His creatures and by means of Christ, He fills all. Christ died for the whole world (II Cor. 6:16-18; I John 12:16). God can reveal Himself through our stupidity, He is no respecter of persons or ages in His revelations of Himself. He speaks through children. Many a child has brought a parent to the Savior. He speaks through those who come with feeble steps to Him praying, "Lord, increase our faith." He can work through me. Faith is the means by which this divine power is to come to me; it is through faith that I will receive a distribution of His spiritual gifts.

AN INDWELLING PRESENCE.

And in you all: We are to concentrate, thirdly, upon the supremacy of God. However independently we may have lived there always comes a time in our lives when we acknowledge Him as our Master and yield to Him. What a benediction to know that Christ is in me. We are positive of it. A compelling word, an inward peace, a definite certainty, or an answered prayer has proved conclusively that God works through us. It is wonderful for God to use human agents, but it is more glorious to have God work in us and give life to us. Some omit the word "you" and translate "and in all." Removing the personal pronoun is like omitting the personal introduction to a letter. How stupendous God can be in us. He can be in every Christian. That is why Christ said, "Behold I stand at the door and knock." Christ was ready to do everything except force an entrance. Man only has to open the door. I do not manufacture electricity nor do I understand it, yet it can work for me, warm me and light me when I turn the switch. The spiritual energy of the ages, incomprehensible as it is, is mine for the asking. "Here am I, fill me." "I in them and thou in me (John 17:22, 23)." We frequently hear people ask "how can I know that I am a Christian? Can I be sure that Christ lives in me?" We can be as certain of His indwelling presence as we are sure a wire carries electricity. If a dark room is flooded with light when we

press the electric switch we know the wires are alive. If difficulties are removed or we have the grace to bear them we are sure Christ dwells within us. There can be no doubt of the reality of His presence. We are positive and are willing to lose our life and our all rather than fail Him or be separated from Him who is in us and who is our all. In conclusion, we are one in Christ not because we use the same words in worshiping Him or share the same hopes in describing Him or speak the same forms in adoring Him, but because we derive a common life from Him who dwells equally in our hearts. We are redeemed by the same blood which flowed from His wounds; we are strengthened by the same Spirit which He left as a comforter to those who did not see Him. How many of these seven points have clean contact in our lives? Let us carefully check each. Failure in any one of them may cause weakness in all. A fouled plug disregarded may stall an engine. How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? Do not mar the unity of the Spirit and harm the growth of the church. Disease of one member causes the whole body to be feverish and ineffective. We must be healthy members. Let there be unity, solidarity, and God's spirit in our minds and hearts.

VII.

THE MEASURE OF THE GIFT OF CHRIST

"But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." —EPH. 4:7.

INDIVIDUAL GIFTS.

But unto every one of us: The unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and the unity of the church which is the living body of Christ is the best guarantee that the blessings of the God-head are to be received by every believer. As each contributes or detracts from the unity of the church, so each receives or is denied the grace given by Christ. Each has different requirements. The Christian is not made by mould; Jesus pauses before each seeking soul, makes an examination and prescribes according to necessity. There have been movements whose purpose was to reduce believers into as nearly a uniform body as possible; they were to wear the same garb, employ the hours of the days similarly, and reduce differences to a minimum. This is a lifeless, mechanical, unspiritual unity. Christ never set such a pattern. If there is any one thing that we are conscious of, it is our physical, mental and spiritual differences. Though we feel others never quite understand us, Christ comes to us as a Friend indeed. He alone—Source of all life—fills and satisfies. There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit (I Cor. 12:4). "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being of many, are one body in Christ and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing accord-

ing to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching: Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness (Rom. 12:3-8)." The obligations of our gift are stressed in I Pet. (4:10, 11): "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." Each becomes a participant of the gift of Christ. This is to be an unselfish enjoyment, whose value and beauty depend upon sharing the gift with others. A person who possesses beautiful jewels may find pleasure in unlocking the casket containing and protecting them and in solitude view their glitter and sparkle, but the triumph of jewel possession comes in being the center of an admiring throng in a brilliant gathering. The gifts of Christ may give selfish inward satisfaction, but they glorify us and Him when we exhibit them boldly and worthily. Another point is suggested by the third and sixth verses of Romans twelve. Our very differences and the multiplicity of varieties forming a world should make us tolerant of the gifts of others. Their graces may not be ours, but the Lord is using them and us, and His great plan for the world brings together these different and apparently contrasting personalities to glorify Him. White is not a color by itself nor is it the absence of color; it is rather the blending of red, green and blue. The delight of the gospel and the light of our testimony comes from the blending of those varying personalities which Christ gives us individually.

GOD WORKING IN YOU.

Is given grace: Some properly translate the past tense referring to the grace which we received when we were sealed; others use the present tense signifying all the various influences of the God-head which we find present in our life. Grace may be a little difficult to define. It is more than Christian personality. It is the sum total of all Divine influences (Eph. 1:5-12; I Cor. 1:4-8). Anyone who has ac-

cepted Christ as a personal Savior knows that a change has taken place within him; it is a familiar fact. What He gives us depends somewhat upon our needs, our past, and our task. This grace is a beautifying power given by Christ; it follows casting away all that kept us from our Lord; it is a fruit of that new light and life which causes us to walk as children of light; it develops from rebirth and grows in an open mind free from all habits which have enslaved. If we do not possess this grace we will be conscious of its absence; if we have ever received it we will know it. All should ask very definitely for this grace to be given. Have I received it? Do I have it now?

The purpose of this inworking of a Divine influence is to live testifying to God's power. This grace is to be used as a servant uses a talent (Matt. 25:14-46). God is not honored by unused talents. Let us live "as good stewards of the manifold grace of God (I Pet. 4:10)." When we think of the Author of our gift and of the purpose for which it was received it would be impossible to ever abuse it or use it for any other purpose than that for which it was given. "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. . . . But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will (I Cor. 12:7,11)." We are "justified by his grace (Titus 3:7)."

CHRIST'S LIMITLESS SUPPLY.

According to the measure: Christ does not distribute gifts unwisely. He is not like that odd character of the Mohave Desert who, after locating his gold, came to Los Angeles and, taking handsfull of the precious metal, threw it into the crowds to see them scamper for its possession. God wisely gives His gifts according to our needs; His disciples are hand picked and hand trained. Christ gives His grace proportionately to our needs. Because of Christ's loving nature, His measure is pressed down, running over and full. We never are quite sure of the standard of man's measure; constant checks need to be made upon these standards lest avarice and love of gold shrink them. The measure of Christ is stable and unlimited. He will continue pouring out His grace until

the church attains the fullness of the stature of Christ, according to the measure of the Father's glory, infinite and inexhaustible; according to the working of the strength of His might which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead; according to all the fullness of God who does exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think; and according to that wealth which divides to every man severally as he will. "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will (I Cor. 12:11)." While Christ's measure is unlimited, the amount we receive is measured by our faith. Here is a great reservoir. One whose faith is weak takes a small vessel, another abundant in faith provides for his every want and for possible contingencies. Some seek small favors from God, others, like those afflicted with leprosy, desire complete healing and are not satisfied until they have received it. Expect great things from God. Doubts are debris which block up the channel of our faith and bring torturing, uncertain, unsatisfied trickles instead of great, full, satisfying and adequate streams of grace. A room can be darkened on the brightest day; faith raises the curtains and lets the sunlight stream in. "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief."

GENEROSITY OF CHRIST'S LOVE.

Of the gift of Christ: We can never earn salvation. The Philippian jailer who had seen the release of his prisoners cried out to Paul and Silas, "What must I do to be saved?" And they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thine house." The jailer was thinking largely of his own humiliation and death due to the escape of his prisoners. But the measure of Christ was not only the physical saving of his prisoners and therefore his life, but also the spiritual saving of his entire household by bringing them into the knowledge of Christ. The record tells us of the jailer's acceptance of the offer—"he rejoiced believing in God with all his house (Acts 16:24)." Have we done as much? In this factory age we are apt to judge Christians by certain

acts, patterns, forms and ceremonies, and condemn those whose Christian experience does not exactly coincide, or say that others are not true Christians. The gifts of Christ should not be so interpreted. He gives freely of His grace to all who seek Him. Christ's gifts are hand-tailored, not custom-built. He died to give us His blessing and be the propitiation of our sins; He lives to distribute His gifts of pardon, strength and holiness. Though cut from the same piece of cloth, we need individual fitting. Let us not mar the unity of the Christian household by jealousy of others' gifts or by keeping our talents in a napkin.

VIII.

GOD'S GIFT TO MAN.

"Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men."—EPH. 4:8.

THE PROOF OF SCRIPTURE.

Wherefore he saith: Paul, perfect master of logic, supports his present contention by the testimony of Scripture of which God is the Author. Paul wishes us to know that every portion of his teaching can be supported by Scripture. How wonderful if we were as careful in our instruction and preaching. We ought to be able to refer definitely and accurately to confirmation by God's Word and to prove our position by "as the Scripture says." It is unusual for him not to definitely mention the Scripture quoted and to say "the Scripture saith," as in Rom. 4:3; 10:11. At times, Paul definitely quotes the writer of the inspired message he is using to support his argument. Examples of this are found in Rom. 15:12; Acts 13:35. There can be no division and no recourse if Scripture proves our point. Let us be careful lest our argument be a patchwork of Scriptural passages rather than the correct Word of God accurately given and emphasized. We are not to attempt to justify personal opinions in the Scriptures. Our task is to interpret what God has spoken.

VICTORY ONCE AND FOR ALL.

When he ascended: This passage is presumably a quotation of Psa. 68:18, though we find several changes from the original. Because of this apparent free rendering, some believe this verse is an allusion to an early Christian hymn which referred to victory over death and the certainty of our immortality. This is not likely, however, as Paul rarely makes local reference. He does undoubtedly take some liberty with his

quotation from Psalms but for a specific, justifiable purpose. David talked frequently of the coming Messiah and in these words probably prophesied the final ascension of Christ after His conflict with the world and His conquest of the hearts of men. Some past historical event subsequent to the return from the Babylonian exile and the literal ascent of Mount Zion in Jerusalem fills David with a note of triumph and with joyous heart he speaks of the permanent return of God and of His victories over all oppressing forces. While David was thinking more of the triumph of God, Paul has in mind the permanent ascension of Christ to the right hand of God, which took place before the Day of Pentecost when the promised power was given to those who gathered with one accord in one place seeking the will of God.

Paul's apparent change in the historical meaning of the words no way minimizes the value of the present references. He is undoubtedly thinking of what he would dwell upon now that Christ ascended only to come again. The sacrifice has been made, the price has been paid, now we wait eagerly for the fullness of time when He shall come again. Herein the ascension of Christ differs from other ascensions. The Old Testament gives us the ascent of Elijah; the New Testament gives us the ascension of Christ and speaks of the time of our rising. As Christ arose once and for all having gained the victory over death and the grave, we shall rise. Our task is to wait and confidently and patiently run the race which is set before us.

A PLACE OF POWER.

Up on high: The high places are always points of advantage; here the great fortresses were built and on their battlements the lookout surveyed the surrounding territory. Around these battlements great wars were waged. Christ is on high, and sitting on this vantage point He surveys your needs and mine. Here He excels over the writer of the Psalms who referred not to heaven but to Mount Zion, where the Jewish people believed God dwelt. The safety and security of Jerusalem were signs of the everlasting security of God's people from all enemies. When a conqueror returned from battle he

not only shouted the song of victory, but he also distributed the spoils of battle among those who had been loyal followers (Jer. 31:12). From the eternal dwellingplace of God in the heavens, Paul symbolically sees Christ the Conqueror dispensing gifts to loyal disciples. The Old Testament contemplates the prophetic work of Christ, while Paul speaks of the priestly work of Christ.

ENEMIES ARE OVERCOME.

He led captivity captive: Just what was taken captive? There is quite a difference of opinion as to the meaning of this particular phrase. Using the Old Testament background, some believe reference is made to first, the removal of the ark into Zion (II Sam. 6:12 and I Chron. 15); second, unnamed victories of David; third, the placing of the ark in Solomon's temple; fourth, the victories of Jehosaphat and Jehoram over Moab (II Kings 3); fifth, the check given the Assyrians in Hezekiah's time; sixth, the consecration of the temple of the restoration period and the return of the captivity; seventh, the struggle between Egypt and Syria for the possession of the Promised Land near the end of 300 B. C.; eighth, the victory of Jonathan in the Maccabean wars; ninth, the struggle between Ptolemy Philometer and Alexander Balas.

Others, not limiting the interpretation to the Old Testament background, believe reference here is to Christ, or the victories of God over all our spiritual foes, in which the Lord will take captive all the powers and hosts of evil, all the lusts of the flesh, the devil, and any power or principality which opposes His will. A third group would limit the victory to the redemptive work of Christ and those evil powers which were conquered by Christ. Who are the captives? Are they those slaves to sin who have been liberated from their bondage upon being followers of Christ? Is He freeing us from the tyranny of the evil one? Is He thinking of all who are enemies of Christ and all who are opposing the growth of the church? Is reference made to death which has been vanquished and sin whose power has been broken? From these different views we have considerable liberty in having them include both the visible and invisible influences and foes to

the building of the church. Of this we are certain, whatever Christ has made captive gives the church greater freedom and power. Those forces which have hindered the growth and influence of the church are no longer free to do their evil work.

THE DIVERSITY OF GIFTS.

And gave gifts unto men: Every Christian shares in the victories of Christ just as every conqueror shared with his gallant soldiers the spoils of battle. These gifts are given to each individual and are given to the church as a whole. Possibly these words are a quotation from some of the early targums, "Thou has given them gifts even to the sons of men." The Jews could look back to previous victories in their history and recall how in the day of triumph every fighter was paid from the booty won. Jehovah as Conqueror receives the gifts of His captives and makes His dispositions among the faithful. Paul changes from Jehovah receiving gifts to Christ giving gifts, from the Psalm of Messanic interpretation to a later day Messanic application, and from the historical meaning of the Psalm. The Old Testament victory was a part of the triumph of the Kingdom of God to conclude with the victory of the Messiah. Undoubtedly many readers were thinking not of past wars or of any imminent war, but of themselves as enslaved by habits which they had found it impossible to break until Christ had entered their life. At the command of Christ, the powers were broken and the soul which had been so enslaved by personal greed and selfishness was free to serve a new Lord and Master.

What gifts does He give us? These are too many to enumerate. We are unable to count our blessings and name them one by one. But we can say, (1) He has brought life, immortal life, a life communing with God, spent in fellowship with angels and saints, and a life which is incorruptible. Jesus was always speaking of life. He was the bread of life; He was the water of life, the tree of life. "He that hath the Son hath life." (2) He gives us rest within and without. There is a difference between peace and rest; the peace of God passeth all understanding. Rest is not inactivity. (3) He

gives us sound sleep, free minds, clear consciences and undisturbed thoughts. (4) He brings peace. The unfair demands of Satan are forever destroyed. Security, safety and happiness reign throughout the land. "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you." (5) He gives us the gift of His love, a beautiful, noble and holy thing which inspires our lives, purifies our hearts and draws us near to the One who is love. (6) He gives us Himself, the most precious and priceless gift. Without Him we cannot live or move or have our being. (7) He brings freedom from Satan and his service and satisfying rewards for our service to Him. Ask anyone who has lived in sin and turned from it to follow Christ whether he has any regrets? He will immediately praise God and describe new blessings received. These gifts are unto men. Satan takes man's most cherished possession; Christ leads captivity captive and gives man His grace.

IX.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST'S VICTORY

"Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?"—EPH. 4:9.

CHRIST HAS RISEN.

Now that he ascended: Undoubtedly Paul wishes to emphasize the historical ascent of Christ which resulted in His physical withdrawing from the earth and His spiritual exaltation on the throne with God which followed and came as a reward for His suffering and humiliation. "He" must refer to Christ because God does not descend or ascend. The Old Testament gives examples of God's appearances on earth, but Paul with the early church thought exclusively of Christ not as overshadowing God, but as interpreting God. Paul was like an ambassador from a well known, friendly country, who directly represents the powers which sent him. Christ ascended from the suffering of the Cross. Jesus, taking the form of a man, left the throne in order to be born in a manger and live in the midst of sin. Now He returns upward to that throne. Heaven is always spoken of as being above and hell as being below.

A ROYAL DESCENT.

What is it (that is, what does it imply?) but that he also descended first: Christ was of Divine and heavenly origin and, hence, unlike others who have lived on earth. Coming from a seat of royalty, He descended from heaven, taking the form of man in order to reveal God and interpret Him to mankind. By descending He became the Incarnate Son of God, and by His birth of the virgin Mary the Son of man again having ascended to heaven, He descends in a very intimate way into the heart of each believer who will accept His redeeming work. "No man hath ascended up into heaven but he that came down from heaven (John 3:13)."

THE LOWEST DEPTHS.

Into the lower parts of the earth: Paul delights in contrasts. He speaks of Christ who ascended on high far above all heavens and of Christ who descended into the lower parts of the earth. Just what is implied by these lower parts? Is it Hades, or Sheol or the grave? Six possible views have been held: (1) All of the earth is contrasted with heaven and Christ descends to this earth as incarnate Son of God (Isa. 44:23). (2) Reference is made to the three days which were spent in the grave and in that underworld of death and burial (Psa. 63:9, 10). (3) The work done by Christ in this under world or "limbus" does not imply that Christ entered the state of disembodied souls in common with all who die (I Pet. 3:18, 19). (4) As heaven is the throne and scene of Christ's triumph, so earth is the scene of the atoning work of Christ. The word "lower" is used to distinguish the physical location of the earth from the upper reaches of heaven. (5) Dr. Erdman takes the view that, in His sacrifice, Christ became obedient unto death and for three days continued in the state of those who are dead. (6) Hades or the underworld (Ezek. 32:24).

Which of these views we accept depends largely upon our interpretation of the context. Paul is not speaking here of the soul; its location or condition following death, but rather of the perfect work of Christ who humbled Himself and is now exalted. The death and burial of our Lord is vitally related to the believer who is to be attached to His church. Because death was unable to bind Christ we have the certain hope of freedom from the bonds of death. Christ could pass through the realm of lost souls and continue to the complete glory of His triumph. Paul emphasizes the historical ascent of Christ, an ascent from the earth which is under the heaven rather than the earth which held the body of Christ the three days between His burial and resurrection. Idle curiosity would like to know whether He preached in the realm of lost souls, whether some were given a second chance or whether He there proclaimed His presence as being the Son of God who could triumph over death. On earth He proved his

ability to live in a world of sin and temptation without being contaminated by its contact, and in death He proved His ability to rise victorious over the power of the Devil and his hosts. He was Victor over suffering and conquered death which man most fears. "I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath (Acts 2:19)." There are heights of heaven and depths of earth. As Lord of all, Christ took possession of the earth and that world beneath it peopled by departed spirits. At His ascension, He rose from this dark domain to a position of glory and light. This contrast between His ascent and descent is found again in John 3:3, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true; for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I came and whither I go (John 8:14)." "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father (John 16:28)."

X.

THE TRIUMPHAL ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

"He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things."—EPH 4:10.

THE INCARNATION.

He that descended: Paul seems to be repeating the thought of the previous verse. This is not only a restatement of fact, but also an outlet for the wonder this fact stirs in his own mind as he thinks of the complete price of redemption. The more mature Paul's Christian faith becomes and the more complete his knowledge of God's plan of salvation, the more stupendous does Christ's voluntary descent from heaven appear. Though Son of God, He became Son of Man; from dwelling in the delights of heaven, He moved in a sin-cursed world which eventually put Him to death on a Cross, the symbol of shame. The humiliation of Christ began with His incarnation; the Son of God left heaven to be born in a manger and develop under human parents in the humblest of homes. This humiliation matures in suffering and pain, being perfected among those who disbelieve in Him and who rebel against His Father. Christ passed through the refining fires of death; His humiliation is complete in His burial. Paul marvels not at Christ's ascension which as Son of God you would expect, but at the descent of Christ. This descent might have been momentary as in the visitation of angels or occasional as the appearance of God in the Old Testament. Instead, He suffered for over thirty years the physical limitations of a human body.

DEATH CONQUERED.

Is the same also that ascended: The ascension of Christ was more than a triumph over death or the glorification of Christ's body. He rose a conqueror having accomplished the work

He was sent to perform. The same Christ who was born in a manger now sits at the right hand of God. The identical person known as Jesus is the one who vanished from the sight of the little group of followers on a hill outside of Jerusalem. The ascension is a historical fact which cannot be debated; His ascension was not hearsay, it was not an invention of the disciples who tried to explain away His death or the unsealed tomb, it was not a dream or vision, but truth. David prophesied concerning the victorious One in the Old Testament; this conqueror had come in the form of Christ and having fulfilled prophecy and made the vicarious sacrifice, He returns to His sphere of authority. Calvary did not end His life. It marked the beginning of a new sphere of power and influence unhindered by the limitations of a body. Now He spiritually ministers to all whose faith reaches toward Him. This truth needed utterance. Many had not seen Christ nor heard Him, and it was important to convince these that Jesus' glorification did not mark the end of Christ's life as it marks the ending of men's lives. The early church was founded upon this ascension and hope. While the church today stresses the immortality of the soul and an indwelling living Christ, we have lost a great deal of the glory the fact brought to the minds of the early Christians.

CHRIST ABOVE ALL.

Up far above all heavens: Paul does not generally indulge in superlatives, but we find an example of them here. It is possibly because there was quite a difference of opinion existing then as to the location of heaven. Jewish rabbis used to speak of from two to seven heavens; three were quite commonly accepted: The first heaven being bounded by the clouds or that atmospheric region which ceases to support life; the second, that home of the stars and planets about which astronomers know so little; and the third, that sphere where Christ's throne may be found and where God lives. Of course it is taken for granted that the authority of God extended through all heavens. Paul recognizes the third heaven as being the dwelling-place of God and the destination of the

souls believing on Christ (II Cor. 12:2). It is doubtful whether we have any right to quibble over whether there is one or more heavens; Paul certainly was making no effort in this direction. He felt that the soul of Christ had passed from earth into the presence of God wherever He dwelt; that the soul had journeyed above all created life into the highest of all heights. It is impossible to conceive of any elevation above the final dwelling place of God and His Son Jesus. When Christ ascended, He kept on ascending until He was at the throne of His Father in heaven, where He became exalted to a position of supreme power. "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession (Heb. 4:14)." "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens (Heb. 7:26)."

Some would have us believe in regions or spheres of upper worlds; there is the land of men, there is a region of angels and there is the dwelling place of God, but this is useless speculation. Wherever heaven is, it is a place prepared for all who believe on Him and long for His appearing; it is a place whose beauty is beyond description and perfectly satisfied all the longings of the human soul. There is no better place. Those who live there find nothing lacking; heaven is above all visible and invisible creation, it is safe beyond the influences of all thrones, powers and principalities.

CHRIST FILLING ALL THINGS.

That he might fill all things: The purpose of Christ's exaltation and the reason for the elevation of Christ's body and spirit was that He might fulfill all prophecy, receive all glory, and answer the desires of His people. He fills all things to give grace to the church which is His body and to adequately answer the prayer of each disciple.

Christ is the only one who has or ever will fill all things. The Jewish kings, prophets and priests accomplished a great deal, yet at the height of their glory, their throne and power always rested on a tottering base. The Roman empire seemed

invincible, yet the great empire was soon to lie in crumbling ruin. But Christ, to whom "all power is given in heaven and on earth," remains conqueror. He fills all with His power and with those qualities of perfection which cannot be possessed apart from Him. He fills the whole great universe with His power. He fills the universe in all its parts. He fulfills all promises concerning His kingdom and that promise given (Psa. 16:10) "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell." He fills by His influences, by His presence, sovereignty, and care and by the working of His Holy Spirit. This was not possible until He ascended into heaven. Even human beings can exert a larger influence than their actual presence makes possible. He filled all things because "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth (Matt. 28:18)." "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee would bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth (Phil. 2:9, 10)." He is Lord of angels and of men, the living and the dead.

XI.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

"And he gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."

—EPH. 4:11.

DIVINE AUTHORITY.

And he gave: This verse resumes the thought of verse 8. Christ is giving gifts unto men whose purpose is to develop faith and extend the foundations of the church. While it is true that official boards and congregations elect those who are to serve them as pastors, it is Christ who gives to these religious leaders the call to service and the gifts qualifying them for this service. Paul desires to emphasize the Divine authority of church leaders, for without it, decisions may be questioned and the efficiency of their labors hindered. We find no division here of believers into leaders and followers. God gives each various gifts; combined efforts are needed to do the work which the Lord intends should be done on earth. "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will (I Cor. 12:4,11)." This variety of gifts is needed to make proper approach to the various temperaments of unbelievers. All must work with the uniform purpose of doing Christ's will. Each receives from the other and gives to each other. This sympathetic co-ordination in service is the result of Divine planning and varying gifts from above. "And began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:4)" indicates that God not only gives us gifts but also tells where they are to be exercised. Are we careful in ascertaining the times and seasons or do we impetuously go where angels fear to tread?

EXTRAORDINARY AND TEMPORARY LEADERS.

Some apostles: The description of Christ's gift to the church begins with those who have no local ministrations, whose duty it is to lay the foundations of the church and whose office it is to depend upon their receiving direct and immediate revelations from above for their ministry, its location and time. The word "apostle" refers to one who is Divinely sent, one whose special spiritual gifts give him first rank among the saints. Apostles were God's gift to the church. Most of them had seen the risen Lord. This unusual revelation and remarkable spiritual experience led them to become travelers telling their story to the widest possible audiences. At the beginning of Christianity, it would have been unfortunate for them to limit their field to any one church or congregation. The number of apostles was not limited to the twelve called by Christ. The New Testament clearly indicates Paul and Barnabas were members of this inner circle as also Sylvanus (II Thess 1:1) and Junia (Rom. 16:7). The outstanding qualifications of an apostle was his ability to testify from personal knowledge that he had seen the risen Savior who had called him to desert all and follow Him. The sign of apostleship is given (II Cor. 12:12) lest there be mistakes and false apostles confuse believers struggling with their new-found faith. In their ministrations the apostles included all the tasks of the lower orders of religious leadership, that is, they were prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. After having stimulated some established community, they entered another field, organized a group of followers and progressed further into the heathen world.

And some prophets: The prophets of both the Old and New Testament possessed abnormal insight into the will of God; they were men of outstanding honesty, courage and goodness. They spoke without fear and hence were used by God to speak of those things which should come. New Testament prophets included both men and women. It was their duty to interpret the written Word of God rather than to look into God's future dealings with His creatures. Old Testament prophets were constantly looking forward to the coming of the Messiah;

New Testament prophets looked for the second coming and the approach of a millenium period. Both prophets received direct information through inspiration or revelation from Christ (I Cor. 12:28; I Cor. 14:2, 24, 32). Several examples are given of New Testament foretelling of future events of unusual significance; for example, Acts 11:27 and 21:10. Because of the paucity of early documents it is believed prophetic utterances were mainly spoken rather than written, though they were referred to in the correspondence of their day. Prophets were singularly gifted in expounding the Scriptures and in explaining the bearing of Christ's teachings of their times. The whole religious philosophy of Jesus was such a wide departure from the teaching and knowledge of the past as to make it necessary to have teachers of outstanding ability who could link the past, present and future; men who could read the signs of the times, men who by their wonderful knowledge and their heavenly inspiration and research of Divinely revealed truth could stir communities to witness for Christ, inspire them to new acts of religious fervor and cause men to believe that the voice of God believed silent was still speaking to men.

MISSIONARY AGENTS.

And some evangelists: Evangelists in common with both apostles and prophets did not settle in any one locality; they were called to extend the gospel to the furthest possible boundary and tell the good news to all who would hear. By nature and calling they were propagandists and missionaries; their message could be summarized in the phrase "be ye reconciled to God." Evangelists were filled with holy zeal to bring men to Christ by personal work, as Andrew and Peter. Philip was known as "Philip the evangelist (Acts 21:8)." Three times in the New Testament "evangelist" is mentioned. "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry (II Tim. 4:5)." Evangelists of Paul's day were very similar in their work to evangelists of our day. They conferred with pastors, helped them with their problems, stimulated them in their

tasks, and at all times held before them their high calling to preach a saving gospel to every creature. While the evangelist was subordinate to the apostle and prophet, he was the superior of pastors and teachers. Titus and Timothy, by reason of their remarkable knowledge of the Scriptures (II Tim. 3:15), were well qualified as evangelists; their message (I Cor. 15:3, 4) was to men who were living in sin. Their sole purpose was to call them from sin to repentance. The evangelist was sent to turn sinners from their ways; apostles, prophets and evangelists were founders of new churches; all possessed extraordinary gifts; received their call direct from God; and were equipped by the Holy Spirit to speak as the Lord revealed His will unto them. While not equal in authority or gifts, their field of operation was identical.

And some pastors and teachers: We turn now from men of extraordinary gifts and wide fields of service to those of more ordinary tasks and local attachments. It is doubtful whether we have any apostles and prophets today. David Livingstone has been lovingly called an apostle because of the pioneer work done on the dark continent, the countless dangers faced, and the twenty-nine thousand miles of forest, swamp, and desert traveled to tell the gospel to those who had never heard its message of salvation. But the majority of today's religious leaders group themselves as pastors and teachers; pastors rule as ministers of congregations, being shepherds of the flock whose duty it is to build faith and care for the sheep of the fold. Teachers are builders and architects, guarding the flock and governing those under their charge. Their work is permanent; they build upon foundations which have been laid by the evangelists; they water a growing plant and see it develops to maturity. John 21:16; Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:2-4 and I Thess. 5:12 give the duty of the pastors as having final oversight over the local church as the apostle had supervision over a group of churches (Acts 20:28). Pastors are not all on the same level; the church needs to be well organized if it is to do its work as Christ's army. Hence, moderators, bishops, and presiding officers are placed in authority and churches are organized into presbyteries, conferences, synods and diocese.

The pastor is more stable than the evangelist; the teacher is more stable than the pastor, who may move from field to field as necessity or need suggests; the teacher is usually the residing head of a family. Very little publicity is given to the efforts of teachers. Newspapers rarely announce their utterances, yet their influence is uplifting; the Scriptures are explained and doctrines are instilled in the minds of pupils. Paul was an outstanding teacher who was known as "a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity (II Tim. 1:11; I Tim 2:7)." Some pastors are outstanding teachers with unusual qualifications for breaking the bread of life. Believers seeking Christ must be instructed how to build themselves in the faith, how to have a reason for the faith which is in them, and how to grow in the stature and fullness of Christ. A teacher serves willingly, faithfully, and gratuitously from the fullness of his heart, gives a lifting hand wherever one is needed, quietly offers encouragement, gives new hope to the discouraged heart, brings light to the ignorant, and settles the convictions and eternal destiny of pupils. But the object of each, whether apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor or teacher, is to convict of sin and convert sinners from the error of their ways. Each feels he is fulfilling the purpose for which he was called; as steward each dedicates his talents to assist fellow-men in coming to an understanding of God's will for them.

XII.

THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST'S GIFTS

"For the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."—EPH 4:12.

HARMONIZING WORK.

For the perfecting of the saints: Christ's work needs a variety of talents if the task is to be well done. Christ gave gifts to men to enable them to be light bearers, builders of the church, and witnesses to win the world to Christ. Differences in temperament require a great variety of approaches; no one individual possesses all gifts. Each makes his or her contribution and by co-ordination of effort the desired end is achieved. The measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ is the goal. The possession of His Spirit gives spiritual power, guarantees Christian growth and assures unity of the faith. The Christian church must learn to work together, individuals co-operating and fitting into each other's capacities to complete the task given them. It is our duty to supply the restoration and to "perfect that which is lacking in your faith (I Thess. 3:10)."

The word "perfecting" (Matt. 4:21) means "mending a break" in a net which is useless until repaired. The perfecting of the saints therefore means to put in first class order that which has become disordered, to place in proper alignment what is dislocated, and to clear a connection which supplies power. Gal. 6:1 adds the thought of restoration; Heb. 13:21, II Cor. 13:11; I Pet. 5:10 go a step further and add the idea of making whole what is imperfect. The purpose of leaders in the church therefore is to restore, refit, rebuild, gather up, repair and make good. Life has a great deal of wear and tear. Garments of righteousness need renewing even more frequently than the clothes of everyday life. Perfection is the result of continued application. Michael Angelo was

known to have been continuously at work for one week without removing his clothes; Handel practiced on the piano until the keys were hollow like spoons; Edison was unconscious of weariness when applying himself to the solution of a problem. The Christian's task is to prepare for eternity; equipment is needed, mending is to be done, our soul requires finishing.

Saints might either be true members of the church or those who believe in Christ as their personal Savior and are applying His Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9). They may be God's people in distinction from the rest of God's creation and include all who have made a proper profession of their faith and have started on the journey toward saint-hood. Saints to be perfect are no more identical than a primrose to be perfect must be like a lily or the lily like the rose. There may be an endless variety in perfection, God's wisdom, and in His church.

RESULT OF HARMONY.

For the work of the ministry: The church is to edify the body of Christ. No higher task can be conceived than to build up the church and remove its imperfection. Every gift must be consecrated to the Lord's work. Here is no place for selfish ambition or vain glory; every member has a definite task in this great work; each follower is expected to preach, teach and admonish; souls will be lost unless this obligation is universally and individually realized and followed. Jesus needs individual as well as collective effort. He has planned an interdependence and play of life on life.

The work of the ministry has very definite instructions; if we wish to be artists we learn art and study the history and purposes of art to the exclusion of other interests. We major in art. The same is true of music and all of its related fields. It is necessary to listen to the voice of the Master if we would find mastery. Every Christian experience is preparation for the work of the ministry; all occasions may add to an efficiency in His service. When we see a ship loading at the dock, we know it is being carefully groomed to cross the ocean. When we see a believer in the house of his God, we see fishers

of men learning more about Him to be more successful in their task. Acts 18:26 tells of Priscilla who served the Lord zealously; Mary, Martha, Lydia and Silas also ministered. Our personal life is apt to be pretty thin unless we recognize a ministry assigned to us which is worthy of our best talents and finest training.

THE CONSEQUENCE OF HARMONY.

For the edifying of the body of Christ: In this verse Paul uses that three-fold definition which is so common with him. God's gifts are for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry and for edifying the Body of Christ. We are to build up the body of Christ by a study of His work, by winning new members, by concentrating talents and making compact various differences of His church. The figure here is two-fold; Paul thinks of the church as a building with broad foundations and the hearts of humble believers as building stones; he also sees members of the church as part of the living body of Christ whose duty is to promote the spirit of growth, to extend the work of grace in the hearts, to stimulate the expansion of church membership and to build up a strong spiritual body (Luke 12:18). In order to edify it is sometimes necessary to point out faults or to enlarge the interests of a group. This is a responsibility which usually gives offense and frequently gives rise to misunderstanding and consequent anger. Edifying always involves a clear pointing to the path of duty. We sometimes forget that Christ expects us to be identified as part of His body; we cannot be cool or indifferent or casual; the church is developing. Like the giant redwoods, the church becomes more vigorous with the passing of centuries. Its condition of health, however, is dependent upon its living members; it can be no stronger than its weakest member.

There is some question as to what is meant by the body of Christ. Does he refer to the universal church or a local church? Are only those completely saved members of this body, or does everyone belong in this group who has an honest belief in Christ and sincerely strives to follow Him? We are sure of this, "Except the Lord build the house they

labor in vain that build it." Paul frequently spoke of the universal church as being the body of Christ (Col. 1:24; I Cor. 10:16). This liking the church to a body appealed to the early church as a symbol of the unity and interdependence of its members. The individual who accepted Christ as a personal Savior did not lose individuality by so doing. His struggle to live up to the level of his ability, his consecration and cooperation in service, make him increasingly effective a part of His body. He was like a finger or an eye or ear of the body. Christ has appointed each believer to edify the body. A body does not grow hands this year, feet the next. All parts grow simultaneously. So with the member of Christ's living body. It is visible to all; it possesses life, its end is to produce a healthy, well-built body and complete the church of Christ.

Until this end has been achieved, the Christian is to labor; the Spirit will lead us into all truth and enable us to bear fruit. We are to exhibit the mind and character of Christ; the presence of His Spirit is evidenced by loyalty and cleanness of mind, holy and reverent attitude of worship, obedience and devotion to our Master and our compassion for those who fall by the wayside. Can we honestly say that we are edifying this Body of Christ? There is no doubt as to what He is doing for us, but what are we doing for Him? "If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body (I Cor. 12:15)?" Our gifts and talents are given us to upbuild first ourselves and then others. As members of this body of Christ, guard against disease which may spread to other members of the body and paralyze their usefulness; have a constant concern for the welfare of fellow Christians. "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it (I Cor. 12:26)." "Wherefore comfort one another with these words (I Thess. 4:18)," being loyal to the word of God, consecrating all to the Master's use and being willing to sacrifice all in His behalf.

XIII.

THE GOAL

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."—EPH. 4:13.

PURPOSEFUL PREPARATION.

Till we all come: Paul conceived of the church of Christ as a body united in faith and complete in manhood, which never lost sight of its goal of meeting its Lord. In discouragement they were to think of the day when, standing in His presence, all would be well. The magnet which draws us on is this crowning day when we shall be complete in Him. Every Christian has his hope; all Christ's people anticipate this joyful hour. Christ died to save a lost world, His plan of salvation saves the unsaved and opens eyes to see and ears to hear Him. Christians who long for His coming form a family circle with privileges, suggested by Graham, of being elected to eternal sonship, of being regenerated by His Sonship and the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35), and of sharing the experience of Christ who first rose from the grave (Rev. 1:5; Col. 1:18). No man knows the day nor the hour of His coming nor the moment when we will be called to be with Him, but of this we are sure, Christ's gifts will never cease to continue to operate for us until the end has been achieved. In spite of set backs His church will survive the ravages of time and all that can be done against it; the church is a permanent organization, its foundations are eternal; it will survive until the company of believers has been filled and until Christ comes in the fullness of time. It is the duty, therefore, of the church of all ages to perpetually anticipate His coming, live together in unity of faith and knowledge, promote unity, and strengthen itself by faith and knowledge.

PROGRESSIVE EXPERIENCES.

In the unity of the faith: We have a task assigned, but if we are to see progressive development of this plan for our life, faith must lead us to the throne of grace and keep us near Him. Faith gives us grace to hang on to the end and keep striving for perfection and completeness unattainable until we stand in His presence (Gal. 2:20). Having lifted up our eyes unto Him in faith, we continue and pray, "Lord, increase our faith." Unity of the faith does not imply equality, uniformity or similarity of act, faith or knowledge. We do not all have the same talents or capacity. So Christ comes to each one and overflowing fills his particular ability to understand Him. He gives individual believers variety, capacity and fullness, and ability to work together in harmony toward constantly developing maturity and daily addition to the body of the church which operates under Christ as Head. Paul has been speaking in verse five of the unity of one faith. Here he speaks of the unity of the faith. He is not contradicting himself, but is thinking of the saving knowledge of Christ which is absolutely essential to all believers of the Lord Jesus Christ. The goal always in mind is coming eventually toward unity of faith; we seem a long ways off from it now, but this is not our concern. Our task is to believe on Him with every particle of our being. The rest we must leave to an all-wise Father.

RECOGNITION OF HIS GRACE.

And of the knowledge: This knowledge implies both cognition and recognition; it is clear and exact in scientific accuracy; it is knowing followed by activity; it is a strong, pure, powerful influence which enters the current of our religious life and thinking; it is spiritual knowledge, for "not as the world giveth give I unto you"; and an increasing recognition of Christ, the Son of God, who demonstrates His Divine power and grace in us and is our all and in all. This knowledge has no place for self-esteem; it represents some portion of the sum total of Divine knowledge. It gives us confidence to approach the throne of grace and unhesitatingly appropriate

His love and apprehend His glory. Our holiness depends upon the extent of our knowledge. We become daily more and more like the Master we serve. Our life first possesses knowledge, then our actions demonstrate it, and finally our fellow men recognize it, desire it, and bring their gifts and worship our King as their Lord.

OPERATION OF FAITH.

Of the Son of God: The phrase "Son of man" is not used here because Paul is speaking of the official position of Jesus as Savior of the world, the only begotten Son of God and the Divinely appointed Head of the church, the Son of God who "fills, enlarges, sanctifies and renders blessing to the soul." To this Son of God we are asked to become attached. Knowing Him, we will love Him. First we know Christ, then we know ourselves and love our neighbor as ourselves. It is impossible to have unity of faith and knowledge until we believe on Jesus as the Son of God in office and position, and Son of man in sinless character. We cannot get the most out of our Christian faith until we see Christ as both human and divine. His divinity implies His humanity and His humanity necessitates His divinity.

THE END—THE PERFECT MANHOOD OF CHRIST.

Unto a perfect man: Again we see this favorite word of Paul which is so frequently misunderstood. The preposition "unto" suggests movement. The saved soul is eventually made perfect by being placed in the path toward perfection and commanded to journey until the destination is reached. The definition of perfection here is a full grown, mature, completely developed man or Christian. Perfection is not so much a matter of the past as a matter of the present and future (Heb. 12:23). Christ told Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again." He tells us, "Ye must be perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect." This perfection is not achieved until we see Him face to face. Some contend that perfection can be secured in this life; others, that it is a gift of God received in the future world. Paul is not thinking here in terms of time. His only concern is that everyone who wishes to be like Christ

continue until he has attained the measure of the stature of Christ. Progress toward perfection is indicated in our dispositions. The engineer wishing to know the pressure of his boiler looks at his steam gauge; the Christian desirous of discovering his nearness to perfection need only examine his life and note its deficiencies, unanswered prayers, and lack of spiritual vigor. Have I attained perfection? We do not reach perfection in order to grow, but we grow in order to be perfect.

COMPLETE CONFORMITY TO CHRIST.

Unto the measure of the stature: Paul gives three objectives in this verse. We are to seek and possess: 1, unity, faith and knowledge; 2, perfect manhood; 3, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. This measure is the standard of rule given each believer to make him Christlike. The capacity of our soul is to be filled by Christ. This measure may expand with our years of Christian service and change as a child changes to manhood by constant development of all his faculties. The measure of the Christian does not remain stationary. A new convert has a very small measure, the patriarch of faith an enlarged measure. The full-grown Christian does not feed upon the milk of the word. Looking over the members of the early church, Paul could see spiritual children in the adult audience. He cautions all to keep growing. Conversion is excellent and vital, but it is the beginning of a long journey. We must grow in faith and knowledge of our Lord. The age of full growth varies with different believers. The church does not become an adult until it reaches the fullness of Christ.

THE MEASURE OF CHRIST HIMSELF.

Of the fulness of Christ: There are two interpretations of the fullness of Christ. The first understands fullness as that which comes from Christ and fills each believing heart with grace and glory. The second sees in the fullness of Christ the perfection of the church and believer, when at death they enter into the joy of their reward. It would seem that Paul is urging us not to be weary with well-doing or to retard

growth. The Christian never retires. He never stops as long as there is life, but dies in his boots. The fullness of Christ is undoubtedly the unsearchable riches of Christ to which reference has been made in verse 3. The word is not a familiar one; it is too sacred to make common. To speak of the fullness of Christ is like looking directly at the blinding light of the sun. In Romans Paul speaks "of the fullness of the Gentiles (11:25)" and in Galatians 4:4 "of the fullness of time." The church is here considered numerically rather than spiritually; the church will be great in size. The world needs not more Christians but better Christians, not necessarily more ministers, teachers or officers, but better officials. We make a common mistake of laboring for statistical evidences of growth and in so doing are apt to omit emphasis upon those Christian virtues and graces which are the crowning glory of Christ. Our religion is in danger of becoming cold, lifeless, formal, and ritual unless we are yielded to the influence of Jesus' life. "We are cursed with a low level, we are afflicted with an unworthy contentment." The fullness of Christ implies a complete surrender of ourselves. Abraham had this complete surrender when he offered his only son, Isaac; he was seeking absolute accord with the will of God. We need the same whole-hearted and absolute dedication if we are to be perfect as He is perfect and obtain the full maturity of Christ's stature. We are to be satisfied with no half-filled Christian experience. Christ gives Himself in all fullness to us, and we are to be as complete in our surrender. Only this sort of a church can be presented faultlessly, without spot and wrinkle, when He comes again.

XIV.

A LOFTY GOAL

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." —EPH. 4:14.

ADVANCE TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY.

That we henceforth be no more children: Paul has been holding before his disciples the life and character of Christ as an example of their conduct and has urged them not to fall below the fullness which is expressed in Christ. This word of caution was very much needed. The early Christians, separated from their leader, found it very difficult to be true to their high ideals. The old companions, the former mode of living, their ancestral inheritance, all drew them away from their new-found faith. Paul therefore exhorts them to grow spiritually lest they be like stunted children. Christ intended all to advance toward spiritual maturity. As this venerable apostle spoke to any gathering of believers, he saw more than the ages of those before him. He was looking for spiritual growth. Many who prided themselves on years of faithful following of the Christ he found to be mere infants, for they had not advanced a single point further than when they first acknowledged the sign of the cross.

All can take this warning of Paul very much to heart. The tendency of today parallels the experience of the early churches.

The word "children," is used in contrast to the full-grown man, to which reference is made in I Cor. 3:1; I Cor. 2:16; I Cor. 13:11, and Heb. 5:13. In a certain sense everyone who follows Christ must begin as a child. We must possess that simplicity of purpose which is always evident in those of

tender years (Matt. 11:25). We should always be willing to be taught, (I Cor. 14:20); to acknowledge ignorance and inability to speak the things of God until we have sat at the feet of the great teacher and learned the lesson of life from Him. There must always be that careful training whose purpose is to overcome the imperfections which time and experience can alone remove. Many faults and failings come from ignorance. Discipline, the stern struggle with life, and the guidance of God's hand can alone remove these and give evidence of that growth which leads to Christ-likeness (I Cor. 3:1-4).

This change from childhood to manhood often lacks the fascination and thrill which is frequently experienced by early disciples. The first glow of enthusiasm cools when we come to grips with the stern realities of life. A struggle is rarely inspiring unless we see the goal and are sold on its value.

Another thought is quite outstanding and challenging—the Christian is never stationary. He never comes to that point when he can honestly say he can rest and be at ease in Zion. The unknown, the unfinished task, the search for greater understanding, the desire for more intimate companionship, the longing to be of absolute service, demands incessant striving and daily growth. Each minute presents its opportunity for learning a new lesson, developing from and yet advancing upon that lesson which was previously given.

Paul is urging his readers to change from their easy turning and be stable, strong, and dependable. Children are so easily led astray. Plausible words fascinate them. They are seldom able to distinguish between right and wrong. Christians know so little about the God they worship and the church of which they are members, and life as a whole. We are always in a position to advance from knowledge to knowledge.

RESTLESS AS WAVES.

Tossed to and fro: Two of the most unstable elements are wind and wave. Paul was speaking from bitter experience. He knew what it was to live through a tempest on the Mediterranean and to drift about helplessly, not knowing whether

the ship would ever reach port or its passengers ever live to tell the story. It was helpless to the extreme to feel that you were at the mercy of the waves and that no effort on your part could still the storm. In this memory and picture he sees Christians who do not have a reason for the faith that is in them, who yield first to this doctrine and then to that belief. They are like a storm tossed ship. Isaiah spoke of the wicked as being like a wicked sea (57:20). Life bears out the experience of both prophet and apostle. A soul that is anchored deep in devotion to God misses or rides through the storms of life. There are very few shipwrecks among devout Christians. The immature Christian who is tossed about by every breath of doctrine is in constant peril. Having no stability of faith, he turns with every wind that blows. A Christian should be master of his destiny. His faith, while it has many mysteries, contains sufficient certainty to assure him that he knows what he believes and will cling to this faith and be true to his God in spite of all that may come.

WITHOUT CONVICTION.

And carried about with every wind of doctrine: There is a touch of irony in these words. We frequently speak of the unsound and worthy as being windy. Paul was thinking of those who present novel truths, who pretend to have great learning, but have shallow thinking, as being like gusts of wind which turn and swirl and are unable to bring any ship to port. He therefore warns his hearers (Heb. 13:9) not to be carried away by strange doctrines, but to be steady; not to be variable as air and motion, which caused the ship, in spite of the best possible management of sails and rudder, to change its course.

Believers are to resist the influence of strange ideas. This does not forbid new thoughts or warrant the position that all truth is known, for this is not consistent with Christian doctrine. The church must always be alert to avail itself of any discovery of science or of human experience which will place it in a position to grasp the laws of God more securely. Paul does protest against that child-like dissatisfaction which expresses itself in picking up one toy, tossing it to one side, and

playing with another. We are not to roll helplessly about like dry leaves. We are rather to be like green leaves that are firmly fixed to a branch, taking from the air and ground that which gives life and strength. Believers must be firmly rooted in the faith, well established in the fundamentals of religion, and instructed in the history of the Scriptures if they are to be firm and stand, bearing the burdens which are imposed upon them.

Paul cautions us against the distortion of Christian truths or the perversion of well-known teaching. There are always those who, claiming to have a new and modern interpretation, in their eagerness to get away from the stolid phraseology of the Biblical language, destroy the original truth which is given, and in the place of the divinely inspired word substitute their own inspiration which is human and not divine. It takes careful study, and the spirit of prayer in study, to be able to distinguish truth from error. Let us be careful to always recognize the truth and accept only the truth. Religion and the Bible are not toys. The welfare and destiny of human souls hang in the balance.

PLAYING WITH RELIGION.

By the sleight of men. We hear a great deal about gambling today and speak of it as something modern. It was as common in Paul's day as in the year in which we are living. Many times in the market place he had seen a group playing with dice and gambling their wealth, their bodies and their souls on a turn of the dice. Indeed, frequently these dice were loaded to the advantage of their owners. He is therefore telling the followers of Christ: Remember your high calling and the task you have to perform. Do not lose your heritage at the hands of those who by deceit and skillful art would seduce you and take your rightful heritage from you. This phrase has been literally translated by some "in the dicing."

However fascinating a stranger may appear to be, or regardless of the seeming pleasure which comes of listening to new doctrine, be not childishly duped by these gay deceivers who play with the concern of your soul. False doctrines, like

loaded dice, are not what they appear to be or claim to be. Be alert (II Pet. 2:13, 14).

Children are an easy prey to the designing. We, in our religious life, are not to be like these children—easily led astray—but having convictions, or having once confessed a faith, we are to keep it until it is proved that we should change it to something better. If there is a God, there is also a devil. Where there are sheep, wolves may be found. The wolf by deceit endeavors to get near the sheep, to devour them. We are not sheep without a shepherd. Let us beware of religious wolves and professional doctrinal gamblers who would prey upon us and leave us like one cheated by loaded dice.

CONSCIOUS MALICE.

Cunning craftiness: This group of individuals is not those of shallow erroneous thinking, honestly believing they are right. These with cunning malice and forethought deliberately mislead and plan to tamper with the truth. Sometimes this is in a search for publicity, wealth, fame, and public attention, and sometimes it is pure devilishness.

We still recall the exploits of Dr. Cook and his deliberate deception as to the discovery of the North Pole. Science is constantly discovering those upstarts who skillfully and calmly plan the creation of some fragment of human skeleton which they claim supplies the "missing link." In religion we find even more frequent upstarts who corrupt sound doctrine and whose premeditated strategy is intended to trap and capture the guileless soul who is deceived by high-sounding phrases and apparent truth. A true Christian is never so innocent as to believe that there are not those who scheme and plot to rob him of his faith and guide him along wrong paths.

Numerous appeals have been made by Paul to various churches which have been founded by him, cautioning these churches to keep a proper eye upon those who come without proper credentials and those who have not seen the risen Lord. The false is sometimes quite as daring and convincing

as the truth (Acts 20:30; Rom. 16:17, 18; Col. 2:2; Gal. 2:4; II Cor. 2:17; 11:13).

Be on guard. The false is sometimes so close to the truth that only the eye of an expert can distinguish it. In case of doubt, cling to original teaching before accepting some new interpretation. Great harm may come from error. The old accepted truth which has stood the test of centuries is pretty apt to stand the test of modern life. We cannot place too high an estimate on truth.

One question we might ask ourselves in testing new doctrine is, "Does the teacher of that doctrine have any selfish motive? Could there be any personal advantage from finding followers?" Error, like whitewash, needs only time to prove it. In the meantime, tremendous harm can be done by false teaching. Many souls have been lost because of shame, remorse, suffering, or over-sensitive pride. Let us cling to the old Bible until we find something which can stand the acid test of time.

AN AMBUSH.

Whereby they lie in wait to deceive: Paul, the traveler, frequently journeyed along dangerous roads. In the narrow mountain passes, robbers generally lingered to pounce upon their unsuspecting victims. In the market-place there were always deceptive, sharp bargainers waiting for innocent victims to whom they could sell their fraudulent or imperfect wares.

Paul opens the eyes of thousands who find in Christ their all in all and says, "Be careful." Just because the way seems easy and you find in the companionship of fellow-Christians strength for daily tasks, and though for the time being you apparently have found the ability to break from evil associates, do not think that all the way is going to be as easy. You are being watched, and there are some who will glory in your fall and backsliding. Guard against being an easy mark. You have a soul to save.

Child-like faith does not mean simplicity and simpleness. Avoid being taken in by every deceiver and robbed of a rightful heritage. Having found the truth, cling to it. Knowing the way, follow it. The Satan who tempted Christ is not apt to forget us. There is a certitude in religion; we are to guide our steps by its teaching. We have to win a lofty goal. Hold fast to the faith. Begin as a child in kindergarten, but advance through knowledge to post-graduate courses and be rewarded by "a crown of life which fadeth not away."

XV.

GROWING INTO CHRIST.

"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." —EPH. 4:15.

BOLDNESS OF UTTERANCE.

But speaking the truth in love: We have been cautioned about acting like children, changing our likes and dislikes, and being susceptible to deceit; Christians are to put away childish practices; we are never to lose our teachable attitude for throughout all our lives we come as pupils to sit at the feet of Christ, the Divine Teacher. The very difficult objective Paul holds before us is to always speak gospel truth. There is a difference between being provoked to speak our mind, getting things off of our chest, and saying what is the will of God. As long as we quote scripture in love we need have no anxiety or fear if the verse proves to have a point which imbeds itself deeply and painfully. We must leave the after effects and results with God. Our task is to give God's Word and to make the difference between God's Word and our interpretation of that Word very clear. In these days of many versions of the Scriptures, it is sometimes difficult to see the difference between what God said and what man translates into the Divine Word of God. The Christian is to confine himself to truth as it is found in the Word of God. We are to believe it ourselves, swear by it, and welcome it without reservation; we are cautioned against false teaching, misleading doctrine and those false teachers who lie in wait to deceive by masquerading under Biblical teachers.

Truth is to be spoken in a spirit of brotherly love and love for Christ. It is difficult for anyone to become angry or to resent words which are spoken in love. They cannot consider such as meddling interference; they may not agree and may set themselves against being susceptible to conversion

but if personal work is done in love, fruit will be borne in time. "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth (Gal. 4:16)?"

The purpose of speaking the truth is to give more secure foundation to faith, to awaken a sleeping conscience to the way of the Cross and to point the dying to a waiting, loving, merciful Savior. How different is the purpose of such utterances and the words of those anxious to shipwreck our faith. Some quote the scripture incorrectly or deliberately lie about the teaching of the scripture to deceive the faithful and eventually lose the souls of their listeners. We are to defend the truth spoken by Christ, we are to speak boldly to bring spiritual benefits to those who listen. God's promises fitly spoken may save the lost. Possessing a saving faith ourselves, we are to share with others the means of access and the gift received. Having found God and the power which is included among these gifts of God, lead another into the way.

Sometimes Christians and the church as a whole become very weak in declaring the truth because the truth sometimes hurts; they therefore speak harmless phrases and discuss subjects far removed from the broad statement that those who sin shall die unless they turn to God, who is the only way to salvation. Christ is the truth; and in Him can be found the true answer to any vital question faced by man. Any problem, either past, present, or future can be given a satisfactory solution through Him. Let us live up to the high heritage which is ours, being true in thought, word, and action and speaking the truth in love.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

May grow up into Him: Growth is one of the characteristics of the church and members of that church. The body of Christ is a living body, and unlike the human body which attains its growth, the church never reaches maturity until it is called from this world. The picture of the church is an outline which needs to be filled in until all is complete. Jesus prophesied concerning the growth and development of the church which includes those saved by Him and taken out of an evil world. Throughout the ages, the redeemed are gradually

filling up the outline of the church. Growth is characteristic of the Christian, but it must be well developed growth; every part of our character and every phase of our life is to be reached. Christ never intended a Christian to be a monstrosity or a spiritual cripple. Sometimes the physical world has abnormal bodies having the head over-sized in relation to the body. Christ, perfect in every respect, commands, "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect." We who are conscious of our weakness are to pray faithfully for Divine help in developing, expanding and perfecting our Christian bodies. Only so can we fulfill the plan destined for us from the foundation of the world. Every brick in a brick wall must fit exactly or the wall leans and may fall. Every Christian must be what Christ intended he should be if the church of God is to be strong and perfect. The real test of religion is its ability to produce growth; spiritual laws operate to develop health instead of decay, disintegration and deterioration. Man left to his own devices finds he cannot gain strength. Sin, like disease, is the victor. Christ imparts new life, checks these tendencies toward death and degeneracy by regenerating mankind, by having us grow up into Him, by supplying His love and spirit and assisting us to spiritual growth. We are to grow into Him as a graft lives upon that into which it has been grafted.

WIDE DEVELOPMENT.

In all things: No part of us is to be stunted or limited. When a baby is born and begins to grow, all parts of its body expand simultaneously and proportionately; one leg does not grow longer than the other or a finger of one hand grow out of proportion to the other. The whole body grows simultaneously. The principle of life God implanted in the body governs by some unseen law the growth of all of its members. So God-given spiritual influences implanted within us direct the expansion of our spiritual bodies until we find the Christian graces so frequently spoken of in the Pauline epistles. We grow from grace to grace. This demands absolute earnestness; we cannot be generous in our giving and meager in our service. It will not do to be honest but have a weak faith;

to be tender-hearted and sympathetic and yet unforgiving and vindictive. We are to grow up into Christ in all things.

CHRIST THE SOURCE.

Which is the head even Christ: The word "which" is sometimes translated "because." This probably makes the sense a little easier. We grow because Christ is the vital and governing member of the spiritual body which is the church. As the head is the executive center of the human body, so Christ is the source and center of the believer's spiritual activities. The head frequently describes Christ's function in the church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22; 5:23). A more detailed description of Christ directing the activity and organization of the church is given in I Cor. 12:12-31. Many in the early church were tempted to make it an organization. Rome was noted for the efficiency of its military administration; the Jews sought a kingdom of which the Messiah was to be king and rule with absolute authority. In their zeal to add to the church "daily such as were saved," many would try to expand as they would organize a great industrial concern, forgetting that the church is an organism and not an organization. So we read Christ is the Head of a living, growing body. Constant communication proceeds from this head. Every member must be perfect or the usefulness of the body will be impaired. Every thought, feeling and expression of the individual Christian must be in accord with the will of Christ. A terrible situation exists when a clot forms in the veins or arteries; death may result; a terrible situation also arises in the individual life or in the life of the church when anything keeps the love of Christ from flowing into every move, every heart, and every action. The question for each one to ask is, "Just what degree of health comprises my life?" Can we honestly say that Christ has free access and blesses every part of our nature?

The words, "even Christ," are very significant. They were always spoken of with utmost reverence and a feeling akin to awe; the glorified Christ ministers unto us. "He being dead yet speaketh." Under His wise leadership we can confidently do the will of our Father and have no misgiving, fear or hesitancy. Our only anxiety should be—are we vitally related to Him and does an insufficient intimacy exist between us?

XVI.

CHRISTIAN GROWTH

"From whom the whole body fully joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

—EPH. 4:16.

CHRIST FOREMOST.

From whom the whole body: Christ is the vital source not only of our existence, but also of every worthwhile desire; from Him as Head must come all vitalizing influences. In Him is life. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." He still gives this invitation. Our physical and spiritual body with many forms of articulation comes from Christ. He gives both life and power. We come to Him in faith, we accept His salvation, we live depending upon Him and then we win others to Him. The church which is Christ's body grows and expands, being knit together by a common love, faith and trust. Because of this unity, strength is in all of its parts. This spiritual body is commanded to acknowledge Christ as its Head; our physical body unconsciously follows the instructions of the brain—the hands and feet perform a service indicated by orders from above. The church must also recognize Divine authority and not attempt to rule itself. Anarchy and dissension are signs of disease. Health follows complete surrender to the will of Him who died to save us. It is very important for each to work with consecrated ability. Every muscle, every vein and every fiber of the body has its distinctive work. A vein in the thumb cannot do the work of a vein in the ear. Each quietly and efficiently performs its service to the body as a

whole. So every convert labors for the church under the leadership of Christ. We rejoice that our place cannot be filled by another. The Lord is counting upon us. He needs me.

CONDITION OF GROWTH.

Fitly joined together and compacted: Dissension arises easily in the church. Religion is a source of constant dispute. The history of the church has been a record of repeated separations; denominations have split within themselves. The illustration of the body is therefore very much needed if the church is to grow. The church should be as fitly joined together as the human body. The hand cannot live apart from the body; its health and vitality depend upon remaining where the Lord put it; its past and future life is conditioned upon its firm attachment to the rest of the body. So every member of the church is intimately connected with and bound by ties of fellowship and friendship with not only all members of the family of God but also with God the Father, and Christ His Son. A quarrel or dispute is as dangerous to spiritual health as an infection is to the body. Reconciliation with each other precedes and follows reconciliation with God. "And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God (Col. 2:19)." "That their hearts be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ (Col. 2:2)." The word "compacted" means being bound so tightly together as to leave little opportunity of becoming separate. Our love for Christ deepens with experience. Consciously, then unconsciously, we let nothing interfere with it. Though we are at first tempted to let our feeling get the best of us, we finally yield to His love and mindful of our membership with Him, forget and forgive lest our communion with Christ the Head should be interrupted and we be unprofitable, sick members of His body. Think how wonderfully God has made our body; examine it in all of its relations lest we fail to remember how similarly the

church is to be bound together. In the body each vein gives nutrition to that which lives beyond itself, uniting the extremities with the body as a whole so we are channels of blessing. If our life is a joint, we must be healthy for the sake of ourselves and for the sake of those about us—our families, our relatives, our associates, our neighbors. "Love thy neighbor as thyself." None are unimportant in Christ's kingdom. We never drop out of the Kingdom of God. As long as God gives us life, we must be as constant, direct and undisturbed in our touch with Christ as a finger is fitly joined together and compacted with the body till death.

COMMON GROWTH.

By that which every joint supplieth: Paul leaves no loophole for escape. He knows the difficulty of convincing a doubting soul, arousing the indifferent, and stimulating to service. Some always feel the great commission is not for them, so they settle themselves to be at ease in Zion. Paul speaks to these; "You have a position which is high and noble in God's kingdom. You dare not be unmindful of this high calling, so lift up your head and do your task with all the earnestness and zeal with which you are capable; you may be the source of spiritual strength to some one, so keep in touch with the base of supplies, dip into the fountain of Divine wisdom, stand in your place until the Lord calls you home."

Opportunities for Christian growth and service are never exhausted. Is sufficient life coming from the Head to me and through me to every joint or part of the body? The heart of Jesus never fails to meet our needs; He gives indiscriminately and sends His power to the fullest point of His kingdom. How far does my Christian influence extend? Every beat of the heart sends a supply of pure blood to every portion of the body. Every heart beat of Christ sends mercy, pardon, and strength to the four corners of the world. Every needy soul can find all they need in Him. "He giveth His Spirit liberally unto all." The word used to describe "supply" indicates abundance and a supply which is over and above any immediate demand or possible emergency. Christ always gives overflowing measures with no false bottoms.

EFFICIENCY IN EVERY MEMBER.

According to the effectual working: There is just as much need for efficiency in the life of all believers and in the church as there is in an office or factory. We have our specialized training schools for every department of business and industrial life; our machine age has contributed efficient operation to our day. To prevent possible loss, every bit of energy, time and material must be conserved. Are we as careful of our souls and of our religious experiences and efforts as we are with the operations of our machines, factories and bodies? The Christian should be the most efficient worker; he has a purpose in daily employment. He works with the assistance of the Divine Lord; he is united to the greatest organization in the history of the world—the church, which is supplied from the reservoirs of heaven; we are our only limitation. “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away.” What is our efficiency rating is spirituality and effective Christian work? How close to the character of Christ do we come?

SIGNIFICANT GROWTH.

In the measure of every part: Every limb has its own growth; health in the right limb does not necessarily mean health in the left limb, though the same law operates in both. The same condition is true of denominations, individual churches, Christian households and individual believers. Each works out its own salvation with fear and trembling. No side of our nature is to be neglected in our desire for perfection; we are to be perfect even as He is perfect. Sometimes we feel satisfied because we are better in some respects than our neighbors. No such complacency is possible with an honest Christian for he dare not stop until he has exhausted every possible source of self betterment. Our second spiritual rebirth is just the starting point. A thousand dangers surround a new born babe, a thousand temptations lie above the soul which has found its Lord. A poor Christian can be a detriment to the cause of religion, a one-sided character can be as irritating as a grain of sand in the eye. Keep in touch with Jesus and health will be in all parts of our body.

DISPOSITION OF SUPPLY.

Maketh increase of the body: In the preceding verse Paul tells us to grow up into Him; he expresses the same thought here by saying that we are to increase and develop from within by keeping in constant touch with Jesus, the Head. Just what is to be this increase? Certainly it is more than statistical addition. Many churches are satisfied if they have given as much money as the preceding year or if they have added to the reported membership of the church. This naturally is a sign of growth, but it may be a very unhealthy one. There may be that some dangerous expansion which gave rise to the depression following the World War. The growth of the body is to be Christ-directed and for the sole purpose of building His kingdom on earth. How small a proportion of professed Christians are Christians in their hearts. Think of the vast multitude of worldly Christians. Verse eleven enumerates evidence of growth in the church by the necessity for apostles, prophets, pastors and teachers. Of course the Lord God is the ultimate principle of all growth, the Holy Spirit is the medium to carry the spirit of growth from its source to the point of germination. Our living the Beatitudes, our obedience to the Ten Commandments and yielding to the will of God is evidence of growth on our part and increase in the body of Christ.

GROWTH IN LOVE.

Unto the edifying of itself in love: Love is the motive power of Christian growth. No self-seeking or selfish love can produce this result. It takes the love prompting Christ to gird Himself with a towel and wash the disciples' feet, the love which enabled Him to take up His cross and endure the shame of it, and the love which led Him to patiently make a denying Peter the foundation or corner stone of a great organization. The source of our love is God's love and Christ's love. We are to be "rooted and grounded in love (Eph. 3:17)"; no great thing is to ever separate us from Divine

love (Rom. 8:39) ; we cannot see very far into life ourselves (II Cor. 10:13) But if we are living our life, if we have the hope which He has given us, it makes no matter how humble our place or how dissatisfied we may be with ourselves; by doing our best and seeking His daily guidance we edify Him. This service will be acceptable in His sight and the spirit of the living church will be more beautiful and Christlike because of our contribution. So let us labor in intimate contact with Christ, and beautify through loving service the life which is a stone in the temple of the ages.

XVII.

PERMANENT HOLINESS.

"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind."

—EPH. 4:17.

REMEMBER THE PAST.

This I say therefore: After having spoken of the intimate relation existing between Christ and His followers and the part which every believer has in the body of Christ, Paul asks believers to prove their faith by changes in their own lives since Christ came into them. Paul does not use the personal pronoun in an egotistical fashion but to draw attention to contrasts or convictions in his life; he is a prisoner because of his belief: he speaks as one divinely commissioned and called to preach to the Gentiles; throughout every phase of his difficult life, he has endeavored to walk worthy of the high calling. But this is not in his mind now; in reality, he resumes the thought of verses one to three of this same chapter and bids us walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we have been called, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. "As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you as a father doth his children, That ye would walk worthy of God who hath called you unto His kingdom and glory (I Thess. 2: 11, 12)." In other words, he says, "I recognize your Christian profession. Others call you Christians but are you what you ought to be? Do you stand apart from your former life? Are you the children of God Christ intended you should be? We are called to be saints, to flee from this present and evil generation and separate ourselves from the world." Paul having dealt in generalities in the preceding verse, now becomes very specific and tells some of the qualities the Christian should be demonstrating to an unbelieving world. He asks us to let His light shine before men.

IN CHRIST.

And testify in the Lord: The words "in the Lord" or "in Christ" are used frequently by Paul; "in Christ" is found at least eighty times and "in the Lord" forty-five times. This was Paul's way of saying, "The Master and I are one."; Christ phrased it, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." After his conversion, Paul linked himself inseparably with his Lord; he had no desire to be freed from the obligations of his newly-found faith. Without Christ's indwelling presence he could not have survived the bitter persecution and hardships of his present imprisonment. He therefore speaks "in Christ." The word "testify" involves more than a casual mention of some subject, it is a strong word solemnly calling God for a witness and portraying or enjoining a matter of great importance. Paul's familiarity with the will of God gave him certain knowledge incomprehensible to those less intimately associated with Christ; he wishes to share his method of acquiring this information with those who have not experienced the fellowship he was enjoying. Paul recognized all believers as members of Christ's body; Paul's conspicuous place as an apostle makes him no different from the humblest believer. Christ speaks through both. Let us be as confident in our words of council in speaking of the Lord. Harm and injury frequently follow words of advice which are personal and absolutely at variance from the Spirit of Christ.

PERMANENT CHRISTIANITY.

That ye henceforth walk: Paul frequently expresses the progressing aspects of Christian life by the word "walk." Paul had done a great deal of walking, his principal method of travel had been by foot. He saw life as a walk, taking a step at a time, and a day at a time, but as those on the Emmaus Road with Christ as a Companion. The word "henceforth" is important for it indicates a second chance regardless of what the past may have been; any desire to follow Christ or wish to be followers of Christ is sufficient to warrant the possibility of getting back in the right path and following it regardless of whether one has slipped. A Christian's walk is a life occupation whose chief business is to talk, act and live

as followers of Christ. Past sins are left behind them; all things are new. Better days lie ahead. "Old things have passed away (II Cor. 5:17)" at conversion. Many of the Ephesian church were immature, spiritually; Paul was not a settled pastor and did not have opportunity to instruct them as he would like, but he had given them sufficient knowledge for them to know certain things they should not do and other things they should do; they must not sin against God or harden their heart to His commands, they must have a sacred fellowship with Christ at all times and maintain a Christian's part and standing as sons of God in their walk as sons of God.

"I have tested this newly found faith," Paul was saying, "I do not speak as a novice; my life has not been easy; many and varied experiences have come to me; I have traveled far; I know the problems of the city and the country, I have had contact with all classes of individuals; I have seen them at their best and their worst; as on the Damascus Road, I still believe I do not walk alone; God is with me, my God can be your God; whether I am with you or absent, never forget God's presence and let your walk be in accord with your calling; some speak of you as saints, the elect of God, live on this high plane; you may not feel worthy of this title, but nevertheless keep on living with this high goal before you and keep walking and the destination will be reached."

WALKING IN CHRIST.

Not as other Gentiles walk: The meaning of these words is clouded; presumably Gentiles who had made a profession of faith in Jesus were spiritually no longer Gentiles but Israelites (Gal. 6:16), "Israelites of God" who had become sons and heirs of the household of faith and fellow-citizens in a heavenly kingdom. Christ abolished old distinctions between Jew and Gentile. Unbelieving Gentiles were now the unregenerate, still Gentiles but separated from those who having accepted Jesus as their Lord belong to a new society and new manner of life lived in Christ to be worthy of His high ideals. Frequently when talking to one seriously ill or discouraged because of doubtful chances of recovery, we say, "Look back and remember a week ago—a month ago—you are not as bad

off now as you were then. You have been unconsciously recovering and in due season complete health will be yours." Readers are here reminded of their life in sin, the temptations to which they readily yield, the vicious surroundings which were all about them, the heathen practices which they formerly observed and the many invitations still received to go back to the old routine and mode of living—in a word, the former life as a Gentile.

Confession of Christ has made all things new. They are no longer to walk as other Gentiles walk, but after the manner of Jesus, living according to the new vows and professions. "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things (Phil. 3:18, 19)." The believer takes one step when he decides to turn his back upon worldly things; he takes another step when he publicly receives the rite of baptism or unites with the church; his new relationships, attitudes and activities in the church advance him still further, but the struggle to overcome habits, faults and besetting sins follows all his life. The change from evil to good is not always immediate. A child does not become a man over night, neither does a man of the world become a full-fledged Christian by coming forward to the altar; there must be a regular and persistent struggle to have the mind attuned and the heart softened and the understanding saturated with the love of God.

MENTAL DECEPTION.

In the vanity of their mind: The first chapter of Romans gives a detailed picture of what is casually alluded to here as "the vanity of the mind" or aimless, empty and unprofitable thinking (Rom. 8:20; II Pet. 2:18). The normal believer's life consciously or unconsciously shows much evil mixed with good. A lifetime has been spent seeking treasure, only to discover under the light of Jesus' teaching that the collection and accumulation of years is in reality worthless as riches

in heaven. Idolatry and all its attendant vices is vanity; Christ is wealth. The word "mind" represents more than the organ of reasoning (I Cor. 14:14). The broadest use of the word is suggested here. The mind covers that realm of reasoning, understanding, feeling, conscience which recognizes moral and spiritual interests and determines to walk not in the vanity of their mind—an aimless, valueless but useless journey, leading further and further from the purpose for which life was really given, but to follow after the things of God.

When God breathed into man the breath of life He did so with the intention of giving each human soul a distinct task in the development of His great plan of the ages to build a living church. We fail to carry out this purpose when we live apart from Him. Any motive or attempted justification given for an excuse is useless and foolish. Chrysostom thus defines this folly: "They were afraid when no fear was, but the thing which they ought to fear, those they fear not; let us regard but one thing as terrible, that is sin; and if there be not this, let us scorn all the rest, and him that brought them in, the devil." "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened (Rom. 1:21)." Some see in these words reference to contemporaneous idolatrous worship universally practiced by the heathen of all lands. If so, Paul tells these worshipers it is folly to expect these practices to keep them from a downward course or raise them to higher levels. Idolatry has never been profitable to its worshipers either in the present or future life. If we want to know where we are going in life or what use to make of life in order to fulfill its purpose, let us have "an understanding heart" whose thoughts and quiet meditations are acceptable unto God. Let us, therefore, not be deceived. Sin does not give its promised freedom or reward. God never fails to properly reward those who put their trust in Him. Have patience. The harvest does not come the day following the time of sowing. Walk not in vanity of mind.

XVIII.

MAN BY NATURE

"Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." EPH. 4:18.

The Christian's earthly walk is described in this fourth chapter of Ephesians. It is important for every believer to be a living part of the body of Christ and follow a Christ-like life.

SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS.

Having the understanding darkened: To make his meaning clear, Paul makes frequent contrast. He is describing the condition of a soul before it has felt the influence of Christ. In particular, he refers to Gentiles who have lived in heathendom and were unresponsive to the preaching of the gospel. Humility is an important characteristic of a believer. Christ does everything, we do nothing. Sin blinds the understanding, causing the sinner to be unable to realize the extreme danger of his position. With thoughts, feelings and desires increasingly and primarily centered on self, the sinner confidently goes to his own destruction. Worldly wisdom is superficial and offers false hopes. The unbeliever is living in as much uncertainty and blackness as a blind person who fearfully feels for unforeseen obstacles in an unknown world of unreality and darkness. Those unable to see the truth offered them by Christ are living in greater darkness than those unable to see the glories of day and night with their eyes. Paul tells us (Rom. 1:12) of the blind, foolish heart which professes wisdom of the world. John describes a God who gives understanding that we might know Him. Peter speaks of "girding up the loins of the mind."

The New Testament repeatedly warns lest man become

puffed up with his own conceit and consider his salvation a matter of works rather than of grace. Our spiritual eyesight needs to be as frequently examined as our physical eyes lest our vision of the truth be distorted or we fail to see the beauty of our religion. "If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness (Matt. 6:23)." The coming of Christ brought new hope in the world. "The darkness is past, the true light now shineth (I John 2:8)." "Ye are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief (I Thess. 5:4)"; "who hath delivered us from the power of darkness (Col. 1:13)." We are cautioned to take advantage of this light; "Walk while ye have the light lest darkness come upon you. I am come a light into the world that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness (John 12:35, 36)"; "God is light and in him is no darkness at all (I John 1:5)." Sin is the chief cause of darkened understanding. "Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil (John 3:19)." The Christian first seizes the light himself and walks in the light, then helps his brother to walk in the light. "I now send thee to turn them from darkness to light (Acts 26:18);" "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them (Eph. 5:11)"; "We wrestle against the rulers of the darkness of this world (Eph. 6:12)." This reminder should be sufficient to lead all to self-examination lest doubts and misgivings keep them forever in the twilight edge of shadow and light.

By understanding is meant intelligence, comprehending thought, purpose in reasoning, and disposition to think our way through to conclusions and actions. Faith and belief in the all-wisdom of a merciful God and dependence upon Him is one of the fruits of this intellectual activity which thrives upon dependence upon God whom no man can comprehend. The relationship between father and child helps us to understand how our Heavenly Father is always back of us even though, like earthly children, we turn against a parent who loves and sacrifices for us. Our minds can bring us along the way of understanding, to acknowledge His will as best and be willing to sacrifice ourselves in order to fulfill this will.

SPIRITUAL SEPARATION.

Being alienated from the life of God: An alien is a stranger cut off from the benefits of citizenship. Those who are blinded by sin or selfishness have little in common with God and find themselves separated from Him by definite limitations of privilege. We are born to be citizens of heaven; by adoption we may enter our birthright. Sin separates us from God and the gifts of God we were intended to possess. Union with Him through belief on Jesus gives spiritual power and life. Though Adam's fall separated us from God, we are accepted into the life which is in the Son by voluntarily submitting ourselves to Him (I Jno. 5:11). "This is life eternal that they might know Him the only true God (John 17:3)." This life which comes from God may be a present possession. "Know that ye have eternal life (I John 5:1, 5); and a future possession: "The righteous shall go into life eternal (Matt. 25: 46)"; "Ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him (I John 3:15)." All life, whether present or future, comes as a gift of God through Christ: "By thee righteousness of one comes justification of life (Rom. 5:18)." "Cleave unto him for he is thy life and the length of thy days (Deut. 30:20)." Nothing is to ever separate us or impair that personal, vital union with God which brings us life. God, giver of physical life in creation, is also the author of spiritual life within us. Life can no more exist apart from God than a branch can live severed from its parent trunk.

CAUSES OF ELIMINATION.

Through the ignorance that is in them: Two causes are given for separation from God: first, natural ignorance, and second, hardness of heart. Lack of knowledge of God causes us to live apart from Him (Acts 3:17, 17:30, I Pet. 1:14). Until we know that God is holy, we have no desire to be holy ourselves or please Him. The apostles needed to spend three years with Christ before they were ready to go out and be martyrs for the early church. Any possible excuse for ignorance in Paul's day does not exist today when so many

avenues of knowledge are open in all civilized countries. Ignorance of God's will is inexcusable. It cannot exist except through a deep-seated and ingrained determination to live apart from God. Jesus saw this stubborn hardness of heart in His day. "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life (John 5:40)." Isaiah detected the same blindness: "There is no beauty that we should desire Him (Chap. 53:2)." It is important to use every available means at all possible times to acquaint ourselves with the character and possessions of God. Knowing Him is to love Him, to wish to serve Him and to determine to live with Him and for Him. Ignorance of the law is no excuse for breaking the law. The judge imposes sentences of guilt upon those who had opportunity to be familiar with the law, but did not avail themselves of it. God must judge us not only according to the light which we have, but according to the light which we might have had. There are a few dark corners of the world into which missionaries have not penetrated, but wherever the church has been established, wherever Bible colporters have done their tasks and itinerant evangelists have made their visits, sufficient truth has been told to lead to the conversion of many living in sin. While at Ephesus, Paul had preached sufficiently of the love of Christ to save their souls. If they still chose to gain the approbation and wealth of the world, they had no excuse to offer for losing their souls. They had sinned against the light he had shared with them.

MORAL INSENSIBILITY.

Because of the blindness of their heart: The Greek word for "blindness," here, means hardness and callousness. It represents the condition of separation from God resulting from a heart closed by deliberate repulsion. In blindness having its origin in ignorance, man lives in a blackness into which no ray of light penetrates or hope from God enters—he is completely alienated. This condition however is self-imposed. Man's heart opens or closes at his own desire. If their hearts were blinded (II Cor. 3:14), it is because they themselves have made the decision to ignore the blood of Christ and the

urge of His followers to repent and be baptized. "For they considered not the miracle of the loaves for their heart was hardened (Mark 6:52)." There are occasional instances where the heart has been hardened by outside agencies. "He hath blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts (John 12:40)." "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them for God hath showed it to them (Rom. 1:19)." Usually hardness of heart is due to repeated sin. As constant walking upon a path hardens the soil so seed can find no lodging, so repeated sin makes the heart incapable of receiving Divine truth, or seeing the wisdom of denial.

The rich young ruler who turned sadly away was blinded by selfish interests; he had been doing the things which were sinful and worldly until he was unable to see the future and eternal. Darkness and death are associated together; light and life are mutual opposites. Continued blindness of the heart leads to death. One thief on the cross saw Christ as One capable of opening the door of Paradise to him; the other died in bitterness and scorn without accepting the life which was closer to him and more in evidence than at any moment of his life. Let us guard against these shadows which harden into distrust, disbelief and self-inflicted separation from our only source of help and salvation. The root of trouble is internal, not external. The blame rests upon ourselves and not the world. God's plan meets every possible emergency, but this plan cannot effect us until we make an unconditional surrender. Medicine in the bottle heals none; it must be taken according to directions if health is to be won. Medicine for the soul requires internal application.

XIX.

THE EARMARKS OF SIN

"Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."

—EPH. 4:19.

MORAL INSENSIBILITY.

Who being past feeling: The preceding verse urges an inner consciousness of sin; this verse brings us outward evidences. It is difficult for some to tell whether a tree is dead or alive until spring is well on its way. If there is no bursting of buds or delicate color from flowing sap, brittleness of stem is an indication of death. The person who persistently resists Christ's invitation to come unto Him reaches the point of being beyond feeling. Of course, this condition is limited to the field of religion only. Those dead to Christ may be alive to every other subject: business, politics, society are welcome subjects of interest. They become callous and morally insensible on the question of their lost condition. The largest percentage of those who join the church do so before twelve or fourteen years of age; every year after this period finds it harder and harder to take the step forward and affiliate actively with the cause of Christ's kingdom. Repeated association with evil makes one insensible to the appeal of truth, honesty, purity and godliness.

Doctors tell us an arm or limb which has become insensible to pain is in danger of early mortification. How true of the soul! Our conscience must be kept tender; guard against total abandonment to pleasure lest sensitiveness to the pricks of conscience be lost. "Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron (I Tim. 4:2)." Calvin writes, "The usual symptom of those having been forsaken by God is the insensibility to pain which is here described as being past feeling. Unmoved by the approaching judgment

of God whom they offend, they go on at their ease and fearlessly indulge in the pleasure of sin." There is apparently no fear of the impending judgment; they are not concerned over the fact that no man knows the hour of the coming of the Son of God, they have no remorse over misdeeds and apparently no compunctions of conscience. The hardened criminal cannot be moved by any appeal which would stir the heart of a normal human being. The drunkard is insensible to his obligations as a father or husband and spends all of his wages in riotous living, even pawning the clothes of his newborn babe to satisfy his cravings. Guard against the two extremes—emotionalism and intellectualism. In one, religion is all feeling and expresses itself in extreme emotional demonstrations, frequently accompanied by little practical living. These are tremendously wrought up during revival periods, but cool when the trials of life test their Christian obligations. The others, stoical and indifferent, become past feeling, like the American Indian tribes who school themselves never to show either pleasure or pain. The most excruciating agony is to be borne with no outward sign. The sufferings of Christ should always move us to repentance, service, and deep emotion. Such an undeserved favor of God as the pardon of our sins fills us with praise and loving testimony.

A story recently appeared in the papers of a woman who was gradually turning to stone. Her arms and limbs had already become stiff and insensible, and this ossification was gradually extending to her whole body; continuation of this process meant a living death. How much more terrible is that condition of the sinner which makes him cold to all the entreaties of Jesus and insensible to the near presence of the Master.

UNBRIDLED PASSION.

Have given themselves over: It is bad enough to turn a deaf ear to Christ, but some blame environment, heredity, or education for this condition. Students claim to have lost faith at college or school. Paul now describes those who have no one but themselves to blame. Their coarseness is not mere indifference, they have completely abandoned themselves to sin.

Having made an absolute surrender of the soul, they now deliberately, willfully and persistently have no other purpose in life except to go deeper and deeper into sin; they have no feelings of sorrow or remorse; they consent to what they are doing. They sometimes blame an evangelist, pastor, or church worker for their condition. Paul gives them little consolation. "They have given themselves over." The matter is one they themselves have determined; they are responsible for their soul, they are captains of their own destiny. No one has to do wrong, temptation does not have to overcome us. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it (I Cor. 10:13)." This giving of ourselves to sin is grievous to the Holy Spirit; it leads to irreparable harm. Very few probably ever intended to surrender themselves except for a season; they felt wild oats must be sown, they wanted first hand information. Sometime in the future they would settle down and go straight but they wanted to taste life in all its fullness, so they give themselves over completely into the hands of Satan.

MORAL SHAME.

Unto lasciviousness: This sensuousness leads into shameless and disgusting intemperance and an abandonment leading into all forms of vice. A soul in this condition is no longer restrained by speech, by the prickings of conscience, by fear of punishment from God or personal detriment. Having lost all power of self-control, it is as helpless as a chip bobbing in the rapids of Niagara. "Lasciviousness" is used eleven times in the New Testament. The word fitly describes that absence from all restraint which was true of the Gentiles and heathen world of that time and the modern Christian world (Mark 7:22; Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:19).

THE DOMINION OF SIN.

To work all uncleanness: We are first tempted to occasionally indulge in questionable practices. Slowly and unconsciously a habit is formed, difficult and impossible to break

in our strength. Finally, all time and all energy is given over to the indulgence of the particular vice which leads to other sins until finally every sort of sin is practiced with eagerness and enthusiasm. Sin begins as diversion; it becomes finally a sole occupation because no other can be found. Employment and vice do not go together. In this machine age too much is at stake in the form of invested capital, expensive goodwill, the comfort and safety of employees, and expected dividends to investors, to bother with those of unstable and wavering character. A God-forsaken sinner is forsaken by every branch of society. No one wants him. The only thing left is to use day and night sinking to lower levels. Trench describes this condition as being one in which there are "fiercer and fiercer longings of creatures which have forsaken God to fill themselves with the lower objects of sense." The first chapter of Romans (21-32) gives this descent in detail; sin promising happiness, pleasure and diversion plays with the soul of its victim and becomes a fearful taskmaster. "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof (Rom 13:14)."

ABSOLUTE ABANDONMENT.

With greediness: A drunkard knows the unsatisfying cravings of liquor; this call to his appetites renders him insensible to every other thing. In spite of himself and despite repeated declarations to the contrary, he is back again in his cups. A gambler also knows the grip of his hope for profit. The love of money has such a firm grip that even after everything has been lost, this love still lingers and hopes to retrieve past losses. Sin destroys everything God places in the human heart. This is perfectly illustrated in a story told of the French King, Louis XIV. In order to forever remove the possibility of his losing the throne through the ascension of a brother who was a possible rival, Louis XIV had his brother placed in prison with an iron mask over his face. Though surrounded with every comfort, he remained a prisoner to the date of his death. None knew until then that the man with the iron mask was the brother of King Louis.

We are repeatedly cautioned to be temperate in all things and to guard against that greed which may cause us to betray as Judas those whom we love in the depths of our hearts and would not injure in any sane moment. Many a suicide is caused by remorse for sin committed through love of power, pleasure, wealth or appetite. Christ is our only hope for salvation. Through Him we can be free and free indeed. Christians throughout all time have not leaned sufficiently upon Christ, who is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto the Father by Him. The location and condition of a sinner makes no difference. Jesus has power to save to the uttermost. We need to always remind ourselves if we have given our hearts to Him that were it not for Christ's saving power we might have been like the poor wretches who are in our prisons, reformatories and institutions. Only Christ within us has saved us from their fate. This should cause us to rejoice in our freedom, use it to testify for our Savior and seek those who are lost for whom Christ died. We are the only instruments through which Christ may work. The fields are white with the harvest, but the laborers are few.

XX.

CHRISTIANITY PROVED BY CONDUCT

"But ye have not so learned Christ."

—EPH. 4:20.

THE TEST.

But ye have not: Paul's description of the corruption and godliness of the heathen which has occupied the thought of the preceding verses has been dark. The Ephesian Christians stand in the light of a brighter environment. Whatever may have been true of their past, their present is more hopeful. Acceptance of Christ has produced great changes within and without. Beginning from the moment they turned their backs upon heathen practices, forsaking worldly pursuits and objectives for the heavenly, happier outlook of Christianity, everything was different. Satan and Christ are sworn enemies. Nothing is held in common between them. It is impossible to serve both. Allegiance to the risen, crucified Savior has freed them from the complications and suspended doom attendant upon campfollowers of Satan. Once and for all, the old life has been put off and the new life has been put on (I Cor. 1:23, 24). In Him they have found the power and wisdom of God.

These words of caution are given lest they and we forget that God, the world and the church is expecting something different from us because of our professions, belief and attachments. There must be no slipping back into the old life. Former environments must not lure us back to what we were doing before Jesus appeared to us and called us from sin. The test of our knowledge of Christ lies in the distance it takes us from the old longings, desires and satisfactions. Nineteen centuries have not changed human nature. We feel that we have made great progress from the life of Ephesus, but our sinful natures are identical. The old Adam still calls. Jesus alone can bring us from our baser self to that nobler

manhood and womanhood which rises above the temporalities of the day.

This change need not be manifested by any special garb or routine of living. We cannot schedule ourselves into the kingdom of God. We must be born again and then be and do what we believe He would do and wants us to do. This relieves us from the problem of wondering whether this is right or wrong, or whether criticism will be forthcoming for following this or that course of action. Do what the consecrated heart says Jesus would have us do. Keep near to the heart of Christ. Live in the light of His life and example. "It is enough for a disciple to be as his teacher and for a slave to be as his Lord." The world with its coarse and vulgar enjoyments remains about us. The old passions, sins, desires and voices still tempt. But through Him we are able to stand and having done all, to remain standing true to our high calling in Christ Jesus our Lord. Others will be drawn by the power of our Christ-directed life towards the church. A missionary was describing Jesus to a group of children gathered about her. One child grew more excited as the story unfolded and finally, unable to restrain herself longer, cried out, "I know Him! He lives next door to me!" Is this the message of our life or can some say of us as has been said of others, "Modern Christianity is not vital enough to be hated by a godless world." "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." While others have fallen, have we been steadfast?

CHRIST OUR LESSON.

So learned Christ: If we have lowered our flag, drifted back into the old way, relaxed our vigilance, become indifferent, or resumed old habits, we have not learned this from Christ. Certain decisions were made at conversion for a lifetime. Have these convictions, moulded while warm and glowing, become warped in cooling until they bear a sorry semblance to that for which they were framed? Is Christ still everything? Christ is to be our daily lesson. We generally speak of learning a subject or a lesson; here we are reminded to learn Christ Himself. Christ becomes the subject matter of His own message. As we learn our lesson the old thoughts,

desires and ways leave us. There is no place or time for them. "I live, yet not I, Christ liveth in me." Appropriating Him means we must remove other things to give place to Him. Discipleship means removing the old and separating ourselves permanently from it. To put it into temporary retirement is insufficient. To store our desires in some rear room is inadequate. They must be destroyed. A new creation alone can save us from bringing back into use what Christ forbids. Vice, filth and darkness are of the world. Holiness, spirituality, light and life are inseparable from the presence of Jesus.

We learn of Christ as conversion—not everything about Him. We know we love Him, desire to dedicate our wealth, talents, time and all to Him. We come to Him to save us from sin. But this is just the beginning. What groom can say he knows his blushing bride of a few days? Glorious years of revelation lie ahead, years more blessed as they grow into knowledge of each other. Who can say (Phil. 4:8) what can be assimilated at conversion? Only years of growth reveal "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report." It takes a lifetime of sorrow, struggle, victory and defeat to pray, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto his death (Phil. 3:10)." To learn Christ, to explore His character, to master His teachings in practice, to pray the Lord's Prayer, is the very life and struggle of the Christian. First, we come to Him in faith and believe Him to be all that the Bible says He is, to be all that He claims to be, to be all that we need to have Him be; then, we follow on, and day by day, line by line, thought by thought, prove Him in our experiences and, at death, rest confident in the hope of immortality with Him.

As we learn of Him a change comes over us, frequently unknown to ourselves, though always apparent to those associated with us. Like lovers who grow into each other's facial and dispositional likeness, we become speaking likenesses of the Master whom to serve is to love and whom to love is to

serve. It is no miracle then to have our righteousness exceed the goodness of the scribes and Pharisees or the loud and public professors of conventional religion. As we see Him, the Holy One of God, we become holy; He is to us the Son of God, He leads us unto His Father and our Father; as we see in Him a Savior from sin, He becomes our Savior from sin—and exceedingly precious. To live apart from Him becomes our sin, and to live in the light as He is in the light is our life, our all. Wrong becomes poison to us.

The person of Christ becomes inseparable from His teaching. We study the life of Lincoln and marvel at his wisdom and courage, yet have no sense of fellowship with him. We stand in the shadow of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington and reverently worship the greatness suggested by the messages carved in stone, but there is no thrill of life. We do not stand in the presence of Lincoln. But study Jesus Christ or learn of Him. We feel His breath upon us. His spirit is breathed into our soul. He walks with us, we talk to Him and share our inmost self with Him; our sins are revealed in the mercy of His countenance. Jesus is real, alive and personal. He lives in me. Jesus is His teaching. As we look unto Him, the Author and Finisher of our faith, He suppresses our sinful self and takes command of our rebellious instincts. As we sit at His feet, knowledge comes to us of sin and its consequences from which we wish to flee, of the incarnate love of God to which we cling with the desperation of a soul lost save by Him; of the atonement and precious life blood spilt that my sins might be washed by the blood of the lamb; of immortality and the blessed safe passing from the grave into the presence of God; and of heaven reserved for me and mine as a gift of God to a son and heir—joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.

The only way to know and learn of Christ is to know His nature, His office and His work, and to take Him now and forever as our Lord and Master. When we have made mistakes, people cannot say we have so learned Christ. Let us hide behind the Cross and hold it so consciously and persistently that, in spite of our weakness, temptations and errors, friends may say, "See how he loved Him! Would that such love were mine."

XXI.

THE ESSENCE OF TRUTH

"If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus."
—EPH. 4:21.

VERIFY BELIEF.

If so be: Ephesus was a long way from Jerusalem. It is very doubtful if many—if any—of the people in Ephesus had ever seen Jesus or heard Him speak, and yet Paul writes as though they had. If this is a proper assumption it is a fair question for each of us to ask ourselves, "Have we heard Jesus speak to us?" We have listened to many a sermon, read the Bible frequently, prayed in sincerity and in truth; but do we feel because of it that the Divine Son of God has spoken to us? Is He this near and real? He should be. His resurrected body is omnipresent for the purpose of answering the desires of our hearts. We are not worshipping an historical Christ, who lives as George Washington or Abraham Lincoln and died and lives only in memory or written word. We worship a Christ who lives today, as in His flesh, but unlimited by the confinement of a physical body.

These words "if so be" do not express a doubt as to whether they had heard Christ, but "since you have heard," have you separated yourselves from the world and those with whom you associated, and made your life different from its former activity? Has your learning made a difference and changed your viewpoints and the direction of your aims and life? If you have not separated from former evil modes of living, you may have heard Christ, but you have not so learned Christ. To learn Him means to follow Him in all departments of one's life and teaching. Each one ought to be sure upon this point. When a pupil can solve a problem or spell a word he is certain of the fact; doubt and hesitancy are removed. When we have been seated at the feet of the

Great Teacher and have learned our lesson, we are sure of what His lips have told us. The Sermon on the Mount and commands from His lips live in us as guiding principles. The fact is clean cut. We have, or we have not. It is "Yes" or "No," not—"I hope so," "I believe so; I have every reason to believe so"—but "I know."

CHRIST'S INITIAL RECEPTION.

That ye have heard him: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." "This is my beloved Son, hear Him." We are to do more than hear of Him. Many a congregation has heard a lot about Jesus and done very little about it. We are to hear His voice, know Him and follow Him. We can intellectually give assent to a lot we do not practice. A thief knows it is wrong to steal, yet he keeps on committing crime, being imprisoned, and when released continuing in habits which he knows will lead to later imprisonment. We are to hear Christ and be so convinced of His claims for Himself and for us that we will say, "Here am I, cleanse me from all sin; create in me a clean heart, O Lord, and renew a right spirit within me. From now on, I am yours and yours forever. Make of me what seems best. From now on, for me to live is Christ. I will follow Him to the end if I am the only one to so follow. I will never leave His companionship." "No one ever heard Christ after this fashion," McPherson concludes, "and retained or wished to retain his old sinful ways." Though we never see Him with our eyes as we see our loved ones on earth, ye the truth in Him who is the truth stirs our hearts so that we cry out to Him for mercy and pardon. We cry, "Woe is me if I do not go to Him and cling to Him desperately with absolute abandon, until He save me from my sins."

This definite hearing of Christ's voice in our lives makes all the difference as to what we believe and what we say and how we say it. If our message and testimony is from Christ, it has an importance which nothing else can have. The Old Testament prophets spoke with authority because they spoke as of God. We speak with new authority after we have

spoken with Jesus. Peter was important as a fisherman, but as an apostle with revelations from God Peter was a giant in comparison. In this doubting world of today we need more who have seen Him, heard Him, and can have that weight to their message of one who has been with Jesus. Others can tell how deeply we believe in Jesus. If we have heard Him, we will not be pious on Sunday and defraud our neighbor on Monday; we will not praise Him in the classroom and curse our fellowmen in the shop; pray with passion in the prayer-meeting and have discord in the home and destroy our neighbors' character before we have gone beyond sight of the church.

Hearing Him is not a matter of location. We may expect to find Him when reading His word. We certainly should see Him when worshipping Him in the house dedicated to Him. We ought to be certain of hearing Him when on our knees seeking light and counsel. But hearing Him is a matter of an open heart. Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened up to you. Hearing Him is also a matter of learning each day's lesson and being ready for the next word from Him. There is no purpose in a teacher assigning a new lesson on the piano until the pupil has mastered thoroughly what has previously been assigned. Jesus is unable to teach us the truths of the kingdom until we are willing to follow Him and apply what we do understand. Manna was given daily. The children of Israel were not to hoard it. Each gathered sufficient for his own needs. The old man must be put off before the new man can be put on. The Christian is not to live a Dr. Jekyll-and-Mr. Hyde existence, putting on the old man or the new according to his moods and fancies. This will never do. The old rags of sin are to be burned before the new works of righteousness are put on.

Have we heard Him? The New Testament always represents Christ as still speaking to us. We have an advantage which was not possessed by the contemporaries of Christ. They needed to be where He was; to find out the name of the village to be visited and the day and hour of that visitation, and then be there and be close enough or climb into a tree if necessary to hear His words of wisdom. But we can hear

Him anywhere, everywhere, any time. Call upon Him for He is near. Christ still speaks to those who come seeking Him. "I have declared Thy name unto my brethren and will declare it." In our hearts, consciousness, and spirits He would plant His truths and see them grow. He waits to bring us His wisdom, knowledge, truth and help. "Speak Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Let us examine ourselves. Is my life what it should be and what Christ can make it? Have I been lax, selfish, sinful and worldly and kept Him from having His way with me? Have I been reading a lot about Him without hearing His voice? Wait for a message from Him and our hearts will burn within us and cause us to go out unafraid to do His will. So many say, "I can't pray in public." If we have heard Him we can pray for others and the coming of His kingdom; if we have heard Him, His strength will be sufficient for every need.

CONTINUOUS INSTRUCTION AFTER CONVERSION.

And have been taught by Him: Christ is our teacher. What a privilege to sit at the feet of the Son of God who knows all, who has been in heaven, who was before the world was, who sits at the right hand of the Father. To be taught by Him is to be correctly taught, to remain in vital union with Him, to be enriched by Him, to be capable of spiritual discernment, to have His spirit flowing into me and keep me safe through all emergencies. The central thought of this epistle is this—we can be taught by Him. The world teaches us much. We learn a lot without being able to tell the source of our knowledge. Like the slang of everyday parlance, we know not whence it comes or whither it goes.

Christ would have us observe all things whatsoever He has commanded us. This is more than one lesson. We advance from knowledge to knowledge. By degrees we abide in Him. "Salute Andronicus in Christ before me (Rom. 16:7)." To be taught by Christ involves being in Christ, and staying in Him. Christ is in the soul and the soul is in Christ. "Abide in me and I in you." This mutual relationship develops intimacy as the years go by. He becomes exceedingly

more precious. To be taught by Him has been interpreted by one as being enclosed by Him. He protects us from all harm. As God placed a cloud and pillar of fire about the hosts of Israel during their forty years of desert wandering, so He will protect us from the world and the things of the world. When we are filled with Jesus, desires of the world gradually drift away from us and leave us. There is no sense of want or feeling of lack. We do not miss anything. A person who has eaten well is unattracted by food. A person who has been taught by Him cares not for the new isms, the modern thinking, the cries of those who do not want to think of hell as being a punishment for sin. If the same time spent by some in trying to defend their lack of belief in a hell was occupied in prayerful study of the Word of God and testimony concerning it, the peace of God which passes all understanding would be an unquestionable possession. "Still your passions, muzzle your inclinations, clasp a bridle on your will, grant silence in your heart."

THE MATTER OR MEASURE OF CHRIST'S TEACHING.

As the truth: "He is the truth." This is Christian truth. He is the author of truth. The Holy Spirit may be the imparters of truth. We are only channels through which it passes. The truth which He teaches us is truth in its richest essence, concentrated truth. Truth tells us what is false so we can reject it. None who have ever seen a gold nugget will wish to pick up or carry mica or fool's gold. The possession of genuine gold ore automatically exposes the foolishness of hoarding or seeking that which is worthless. Read the Bible thoroughly, constantly and frequently, and the Bible will automatically place the cheap novel of the day and the trashy magazine in discard. Place the truth of the Bible in your heart and a gaudy display of sensually illustrated, cheap, highly colored new periodicals will have no attraction. Go to the teachings of Jesus to know the truth. Digest a penny Gospel, the words of Jesus taken from the Scripture, or study a red-letter Bible for fresh inspiration. Passages will lure us on and on like a climb among the foothills. Upon climbing the lower elevations, higher hills beyond will lure us on and on until the

peak has been reached and the lower hills lie below with nothing but the sky above. The truth of the gospel has appeal. It creates a hunger for spiritual truth, and dissatisfaction with anything less. Keep in touch with Jesus, measure your life by Him, and all will be well with your soul. Believers are expected to know the truth which will make them free. They must know the truth and have a reason for the faith which is in them; stand, and having done all, to stand, in love, holiness of life, and freedom from the bonds of sin.

As you make an inventory of your mind and heart, what truth is there distinctively from Jesus? What has that truth saved you from and for? Do you, like a miser, keep the truth, digging more and more in His precious word and keeping your findings to yourself and a few choice friends, or do you share it with others and witness the breaking of their shackles and their growth in Him? Truth, like talents, is a stewardship. Truth is light which must not be covered with a basket, lest it fail to shine into our world. Radium is of great value because of its expense of production, but chiefly because of what it can accomplish. Radium is not possessed in lieu of money, but for what it can do in destroying diseased tissue and opening the way for health and prolonged hopes of life. Gospel truth is to save us to save others. "Feed my sheep." "Go into all the world and preach the gospel unto every creature." Pilate asked "What is truth?" because he had not been intimate with Jesus. Those in the darkness of ignorance and superstition are still asking the same question. Tell the news—"The light of the world is Jesus."

JESUS IS THE END OF THE TRAIL.

Is in Jesus: The historical Jesus, the one about whom the prophets spoke, the Crucified One, the risen Lord, the Christ of the Emmaus road, is He who ministers unto us by example and teaching. All who have listened to Him speak have heard the truth; all in Him are in the truth because He is the truth and nothing but the truth. Those who are in the truth will walk as He walked, following in the footsteps of Jesus. Many

hear the truth, admit its value, secretly wish for it, but like the foolish virgins, delay its possession. How many, like the pagans of Paul's day, hold on to the world with one hand and to Christ with the other. He that is not with me is against me, Christ said. "Get thee behind me, Satan." That is the only place for Satan—behind us. We cannot walk with Satan on one side and Jesus on the other.

Truth is in Jesus, who was "full of grace and truth (John 1:14)." Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (John 14:17)." Christ turned to Pilate and said, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into this world, that I should bear witness unto the truth (John 18:37)." Only in Christ is all truth found. He is the meeting and focal point of all truth. What is the truth in Jesus we need to appropriate first? Is it not that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of which I am chief? "Thou shalt call His name JESUS for He shall save His people from their sins." Sin is the curse of our life. We cannot get rid of it, try as we will. It always bobs up, following us, accusing us and filling us with remorse. The wages of sin is death. Christ came to tell us of the power in His blood. "He that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." What glorious truth! Let us hear it, accept it, and apply it. Jesus saves to the uttermost.

XXII.

MORAL REVOLUTION

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts."

—EPH. 4:22.

SEPARATION FROM SIN.

That ye put off: The break between the old life and the new life is to be very definite. When Jesus enters the heart He makes a transformation; the more we learn of Him the more we find to put off. The proof of an indwelling Christ is the believer's singleness of purpose to be like Him, to forsake sin and to long for that similarity to Christ which has been promised all those who put their trust in Him. The words "put off" are normally used to describe the laying aside of garments, but here the laying off of bad habits is to be once and for all; we do not cease sinning on Sunday to begin on Monday, but we lay the old life permanently behind us to fulfill the command of I Pet. 1:16, "Be ye holy for I am holy." When we accept Christ we "put on Jesus (Rom. 13:14)"; "put on the armour of light (Rom. 13:12)"; "put on bowels of mercies (Col. 3:12)"; put on the new man (Col. 3:10)"; "put on charity (Col. 3:14)"; put on righteousness (Job 29:14)," and are endued with power from on high (Luke 24:49) Finally, "we put on immortality (I Cor. 15:53)."

There is no use in putting on Christ until we have put off a sinful life; we do not put on clean garments over a dirty body. We are to put off works of darkness (Rom. 13:12); we are to put away lying (Eph. 4:25); to lay aside all filthiness (Jas. 1:21). "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds (Col. 3:8, 9)." We are "to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our

Lord (Rom. 6:11).” This command does not permit modification or alteration or deviation. The old man describes a condition of sin, guilt, judgment and bondage, the new man which follows belief in Christ and acceptance of His plan of salvation demands the forsaking of sin which He hates and a living unto righteousness that we might gradually become the possessors of a sanctification which cannot exist until we are dead to sin. As a beggar divests himself of his rags and his disease infected garments, so the sinner by accepting Christ’s offer cleanses himself in the blood of Christ. David felt need of this cleansing when he prayed, “Create in me a clean heart, O Lord.” Nothing less than a creation can produce the desired changes. The Christian life begins with absolute renunciation; works of evil must be completely and immediately removed or the old habits will crop up again like weeds whose tops only have been removed, to separate us from Christ.

A COMPLETE BREAK.

Concerning the former conversation: In the eyes of God our past is completely put away; memory may be unable to forget it, effects may linger many years after conversion, but as far as God is concerned, our sins were blotted out when we surrendered ourselves to Him and turned to Christ for the saving of our soul. Ridicule, unbelief, and doubt may remain in the minds of former associates and a critical public, but this must be expected. Only a complete break with the life prior to conversion will satisfy Christ’s commands and the requirements for complete appropriation of Christ. We cannot walk with one foot in the old life and one in the new; the paths go in opposite directions. The characteristics of the new life are truth, honesty, fidelity and purity. We are to be “an example to the believer in word, conversation, charity, spirit, faith and purity (I Tim. 4:12).” Galatians (1:13) refers to Paul’s renunciation of his former life when he breathed out persecution and threatening to the Christian church and the new life when he preached the gospel and was willing to defend with his life those whom he previously persecuted.

PUT AWAY THE CARNAL PAST.

The old man: The old corrupt and evil unconverted nature is absolutely opposed to the new spiritual nature. Fool's gold looks like real gold, but it is as different as soil and gold. The old unregenerate man was the object of Christ's crucifixion; He died on the Cross to save this old man and create a new birth in him. Sin seeks for mastery from the sin of Adam to the moment we accept Christ. As a son of Adam, eternal doom is forever hanging over our heads, but as a son of God, the punishment has been borne by Christ and we are joint-heirs with Christ. According to the old nature (Rom. 7:14) we are carnal; in us dwells no good thing (v. 18); there is a constant warfare within us, a state of perpetual rebellion (v. 23). We are unconsciously serving mammon rather than God, so we need to be "crucified with Christ and buried with Him in baptism (Rom. 5:12-19; I Cor. 15:21-58)."

THE CONDITION OF THE OLD MAN.

Which is corrupt: In spite of anything we may wish to the contrary or regardless of the comforting, attractive deceits of Satan and his agents, we are spiritually dead without Christ. That which is corrupt is spoiled; the process of decay has become so firmly established and developed that final ruin is the end. Sin starts a process of decay in the soul like leprosy or cancer; it eats slowly but certainly and leads to assured death. Sin is frequently mentioned in the Scripture as leprosy of the soul. The Scriptures ask a pointed question—"Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not?" A Christless life is under the dominion of sin, it is powerless to break the hold of sin; only in the name of Christ can we say, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Every day that we live in sin we drift deeper into sin, we become more feeble in our determination to do that which is right, and our desires and convictions to do God's will become weaker and weaker; as appetites become stronger we become bolder and bolder in sin. A social glass at the dinner table appears to add to the vivacity of

table conversation, but gradually an appetite develops which leads to the gutter. We might as well look facts in the face and admit that we have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Only one thing can save us, namely, the grace of God.

EXERCISE CONTROL THROUGH CHRIST.

According to the deceitful lusts: The desires of deceitful lusts promise liberty, pleasures, gratification, life and freedom, but yield destruction, disappointment and ruin. The Greek word for "lust" includes not only inordinate desires and excess but also any supreme desire for wealth, pleasure, fame and physical gratifications. The end is the same; this unsatisfied appetite becomes the executioner of our soul and leads us against our will to death and eternal punishment. In the meantime, honor is lost, we have been betrayed by the deceit of our appetites which has blinded us to the consequences of our yielding and placed false values upon the hollow and profitless pleasures to be received from them. Diverting indulgences prove to be a hard task master and owner. The appetite which is satisfied comes again. Heb. 3:13 points to the deceitfulness of sin; indwelling sin constantly deceives us by causing us to believe the end of the journey will be the same as that followed by the straight and narrow path. Indulgence satisfied for a moment only, appetites grow beyond control; longing becomes a disease for which there is no cure. "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning (II Pet. 2:19, 20)." Recall the experience of Samson; putting our confidences in other than God is certain to result in the loss of our powers and eventual death. Be temperate in all things; never let any desire or appetite lead us to excess. We are unable to train or govern the beast within us, except through Christ.

XXIII

RENEWED IN OUR MINDS

"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind."

—EPH. 4:23.

THE FIRST STEP.

And be renewed: The command really is, "be continually renewed." Not only be fed when famished, but come daily to a bountiful table; not only have a good sleep when at the point of exhaustion, but seek daily rest and renewal of strength; not only seek light when baffled, but walk daily in the light; not only have faith to come to Jesus for cleansing from sin, but continue to obtain cleanness from "the fountain filled with blood, drawn from Emmanuel's veins." Be reborn and live close to the heart of God. Constantly walk as a believer. Paul has been speaking negatively of what a Christian should not be—alienated from the life of God, past feeling, given over to lasciviousness and working uncleanness; now he speaks positively—be renewed, put on the new man.

We are to be renewed and thoroughly renovated. This may be instantaneous with some, with others, a process from within which changes the whole course of life, brings fresh and invigorating disclosures of need and grace, furnishes fresh spiritual experiences and leaves marks of progress. As the years give rings of growth and expansion to the sapling, so God's leading brings increase in understanding of His will, stronger desire to live only for Him and make every hour count for the praise of His glory. This renewing is not an act of the will though we must make the decision to consecrate ourselves to the service of Jesus; it does not consist in pyramiding deeds of charity, or attendance at hours of worship. Long prayers, alone, do not secure it. The renewing process cannot come by longing, praying, determining, exercise of will; it is a gift of God.

The heart from which all proceeds, and the mind conceiving and governing our thoughts and acts, must be cleansed. An oak becomes an oak because the acorn had the germ of life of an oak, and it cannot be an apricot tree, try as it may. When Christ is in the heart you have a Christian. You can have nothing else. The world cannot take first place in our life if Jesus has first place. Any who have tried to live without Christ know how impossible is the task. One person is murdered every forty-five minutes. The cost of crime is placed at \$13,000,000,000 a year. It is estimated that about 140,000 Americans are in prison and about 400,000 are engaged in criminal pursuits. Why? Not because they all wish to commit crime. They have been caught in a stream which they are powerless to stem. They have not been renewed in the spirit of their minds to do the works of righteousness instead of the works of sin. "Be transformed by the renewing of your mind (Rom. 12:2)." "By the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost (Titus 3:5)." David cried after bitter experiences, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me (Psa. 51:10)." The way was not easy to an anointed king of Israel who felt God was His only hope. He prays (Psa. 103:5) that his youth might be "renewed like the eagle's." Isaiah with a heavy heart prayed for hours for light, courage and power from on high. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength (Isa. 40:31)." Jeremiah laments the Lord's chastening of a rebellious people and closes with the petition, "Renew our days as of old (5:21)." Give us the belief of former years. Give us the desire to save souls that we had when we first became converted. Take us back to mountain top experiences. "O Lord renew us."

Paul places wavering converts before the challenge, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Rom. 12:2)." The marks of battle left their sting and scars, but through it all and in spite of it all Paul writes to the Corinthians, "But though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day (II Cor. 4:16)"; in Col. 3:10, he sees in

added familiarity with Jesus hope of renewal and exhorts the Colossians to "put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge." Our power over self lies in knowledge of Him. Read your Bibles and the Spirit will speak. There is no other way. There is no half way. No partial Christianity or pretense of faith is adequate. Christian virtues flower from a heart in which the spirit of Christ dwells. First, surrender; second, put away what is contrary to His will, and third, exhibit Christian characteristics from a heart and life overflowing with love of the brethren and of Christ. The first step is inward.

A NEW SPIRIT

In the spirit: What is meant by this spirit? Are our dispositions and tempers to be changed? Is the Holy Spirit the renewing agent? There is no question as to the need of the Holy Spirit. We are to tarry until we feel its power. But is it a cause or a result, Are we speaking here of the vessel rather than that which fills the empty receptacle? The context seems to point to the thought—renewing must take place in the inner sanctuary of our mind, that interior life which is known to no one but ourselves and our God; that inner life shared with not even our dearest friend; that shrine from which proceeds all our acts and desires. This as well as the lips, eyes, and feet—the servants of this inner life—need renewing if God's will is to be done. To be able to enjoy Christian fellowship, this inner sanctuary must be pure. In I Cor. 14, Paul paints a more complete picture of gifts which come from a renewed mind and spirit. It is not enough to give mental assent to Jesus as the only begotten Son of the Father and Savior of the world, we must go further and be sure the dominating spirit which controls our gifts, meditations, and longings is Christian. How can we forgive as Christ forgave, unless the control room of our heart, mind and life is occupied by the Chief Pilot? You can tell a beech or a birch by its bark, but the bark does not make the tree. The spirit of life causes the tree to be a beech or a birch. So with a disciple of the Lord. The heart counts. God speaks from

within before the lips confess Him before men. We walk in the flesh, but the flesh cannot walk unless the Spirit is there first. The spirit of the world is the spirit of the fleshly old man. The spirit of God is the spirit of the new man in Christ Jesus. The renewing process which takes place at conversion frees us from the dominion of the world. We live in the world to save the world and be mouthpieces of God, but we cannot be of the world and be disciples of Jesus.

The old creation begins with light. The new creation begins with Light. The old life is sinful, evil, corrupt, bad, and distasteful to God. The renewed life of the new man is in harmony with the life of Jesus. It is settled in its growth in grace; it is satisfying as to its results, and it sweetens the life as salt gives savor to food to be eaten. When I examine my life, do I find my impelling urge is to make Christ's spirit my spirit? Does His spirit keep me true? Nothing can separate me from Christ, neither sufferings, sorrow, loss, pain, disappointment, or criticism. Though I stand alone save for Jesus who stands with me, still my spirit will not let me die without Him.

MENTAL ACTION.

Of your mind: The Spirit of Jesus is not kept in a dungeon. Like radium, its life begins when it is placed near diseased tissue. Our mind radiates the Master. Mind covers the broad field of understanding, thoughts, feelings, and the great battle ground of the will. The mind is placed in opposition to emotions which, like mushrooms, spring up and die with the day. The Christian mind must be stable, sound, hard, dependable, set, and determined. It must stand like the rock of Gibraltar. It must be impregnable. Emotion may give us the tear of regret, nerves may cry out for mercy, weariness of the flesh may despair, but from that inner reservoir of Divine strength comes that come-back, that rejuvenation, that spring, that buoyancy, that youthful vigor which will not stop, stay, delay, retreat, despair, or die, but patiently waits for the dawn and the coming of the Lord. God only requires time to prove himself. History is not made in a battle. History is a

sweep of time. The Cross triumphs over the wrecks of time.

The saved mind is active. It is determined to follow Christ at all hazards, to live dangerously even as the Lord. It is significant that sin is not mentioned in the whole of Philippians. The mind is mentioned. When Christ has the mind, sin cannot lodge there. Satan knocks at the door, but Jesus says, "Get thee behind me, Satan." The saved mind stores its memories with Scripture to be ready when opportunity to testify appears. Search the Scripture. Delve into prophecy. "Prove me now if I will not open the storehouses unto you." Have a reason for the faith which is in you. Here is a challenge for the mind of a genius. The most brilliant intellect may wrestle, struggle, deduct, compare, analyze and prove—yet be baffled. The mind of man cannot comprehend God. The mind of man cannot enter into the mysteries of Calvary.

Be renewed, therefore, in the spirit of your mind. To Paul, every life is walking up or down, journeying to hell or heaven. Walk as children of the light. Walk in the light. It pays to serve Jesus. Seek and cherish renewing day by day. Has a change come into my life? It must. By the grace of God, it can. "There is a fountain filled with blood." In that, I would plunge for cleansing. To resist the Spirit's pleading is a dangerous thing. Eternity hinges upon it.

BARGES, SHIPS OR LINERS?

"There are three kinds of Christian workers," said someone, with a very vivid imagination, "canal barges, sailing ships, and Atlantic liners." The canal barge needs to be dragged to work. Often they do wonderfully well, but on the whole one volunteer is worth three pressed men.

The sailing ship makes fine going as long as wind and tide are with it, but when things get hard, when "winds are contrary," when work is discouraging, they turn tail and sail away.

"But give us the Atlantic-liner type of worker, the man who can fight his way through wind and tempest, because within him there burns the hot throb of the mighty furnace of the love of Christ."

—ONWARD.

TODAY.

*Make me kind today, Lord,
Loving, tender, and true;
Make me brave and faithful
All the long day through.*

*Help me smile today, Lord,
Even when things go wrong;
Give me words of cheer, Lord,
Keep in my heart a song.*

*A song of grateful praise, Lord,
For blessings rich and rare,
Fill my heart with love, Lord,
And constant earnest prayer.*

*Show me my own faults, Lord,
When faults in others I see;
Make me humble and sweet, Lord,
Oh, make me more like thee!*

ELLA A. TUDOR.

XXIV.

A SOUL'S INVESTITURE

"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." —EPH. 4:24.

EXHIBITING CHRIST.

That ye put on: First we must put off the old man and manner of living and, having removed the debris, proceed to put on the new man after Christ Jesus. It is impossible to put on new garments over the old rags of sin and evil. The heart is clean and from this fountain flows purity and that which is after Christ. The putting on of the new man takes place when we surrender to Jesus and give Him complete possession of our inner and outer life. A daily exercise of Christian virtues follows. A soldier enlists in the army. He signs his name to the papers once and for all and then begins his daily routine of drill, and a manner of life befitting a soldier. We are soldiers of the cross. Renounce the world and the things of the world. Accept the Savior. Become familiar with His life, teachings and commands. Give ourselves hour by hour to service for Him alone. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh (Rom. 13:12-14)"; "for as many of you as have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ (Gal. 3:27)"; "put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness (Col. 3:12, 13)."

The old and the new are contrasted in II Cor. 4:2-4. We are told what to put off and put on. We are to "renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation

of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." We let go the deformed, decrepit, corrupt, earthly, sinful to put on the vigorous, righteous, godly, beautiful, clean and fresh. We put off by the expulsive power of a new affection. We put off, as the oak sheds dead leaves which have clung tenaciously throughout the winter. New life pushes away the useless and dead. Rebirth scatters the old desires which become dead and useless and releases developing, beautiful new virtues and Christlike characteristics. The transformation is to be complete. The emancipation is final. Abraham Lincoln signed the document which automatically gave freedom to all slaves. The new freedom was real and permanent. Its privileges and powers were little known to the ignorant men and women who received this free gift of human grace. But, day by day, freedom became understood. We little realize what Jesus is doing for us at the moment of conversion. A thousand fears and questions flood our minds. The life ahead is needed to bring us the joys, happiness and glorious freedom included as God's priceless gift. A new world of fresh interests, pleasures, and tasks open up a new vista. Our prison doors are open. A pardon has been granted. We are free—free from the law of sin and death. Two phases of our new freedom are noted—a new nature has been given, our soul has been invested with Divine character and form, and daily renewal takes place. Biologists tell us the cells in our body need constant rebirth to replace constant death if health is to be maintained. So with the soul. Let us therefore put on the Lord Jesus.

GRACE IS GIVEN.

The new man: This new man has an inner expression—"keep thy heart with all diligence," and an outer apparent manifestation through words, acts, occupations, habits, pleasures, friendships and inclinations. The new man is not a new name; he represents a new life with thought, affections, activities, possessions, relationships all different and acceptable to God. Thoughts are clean; motives are for the glory of God; character is clean, having been washed with the blood of Jesus; life is not artificial, forced or make believe. A Chris-

tian is not like a stuffed animal, an artificial flower or a painting. The experience is real and vibrates with life and genuineness. Its phrases are not hollow mockeries of what the heart seeks or the mind creates. The new man is not fancy, prayer, or idealistic aspiration, but fact.

The new man may have three aspects. First, being a new creation, "the holy form of human life which results from redemption, created once for all in and by Christ, and participated in by the individual"; second, a new nature, affection, intellect and will "created after God in righteousness, holiness and truth"; third, a new manifestation of truth and righteousness.

This new man appears at the moment we accept Christ as Lord and Savior. It is a new mold. The old is broken and destroyed forever. God begins to work in us, and continues to work in us. The new man is a new nature, creation, self, character, and order. The new life is an altogether different character. Our union with Christ gives us new standing and peace. We have been regenerated, incorporated with Him and in Him, as members of His mystical body. When we receive His spirit we actually receive Him into our life. It is not only a new man with Christ but a new man in Christ, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God (II Cor. 5:17, 18)."

METHOD OF RECREATION.

Which after God: "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him (Col. 3:10)." This new man is like God, or "after the image of God" and the likeness of God. The second creation becomes like the first Adamic creation in this respect. Godlike are we. When we place our life beside such a life how unclean, unworthy, crude, helpless, far removed we seem. Yet we are to be able to put on the virtues of Jesus in our own consciousness. The world hungers for this today. The church has been exhibiting human traits, self-righteousness, pity, scorn, hypocrisy. Back to Christ! Close to God! A "godly

manner" distinguishes us from the world outside of Christ (II Cor. 7:9, 10, 11). We nod approval of His will and plan, and, imitating Him, pattern our lives after Him, according to His purpose is redemption and in harmony with the will of God.

SPIRITUAL REBIRTH.

Is created: Some texts use the past tense "was created." The true believer can be created but once. We repent often. Daily confession of our sins is made before Him. As physical birth is once and for all, so spiritual birth. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things have passed away (II Cor. 5:17)." "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision avail-eth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature (Gal. 6:15)." "The new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him (Col. 3:10)." What man lost by the sin of the first Adam is regained and restored by Christ, the life-giving last Adam, when he "puts on" Christ and comes to be "in Him." This is a miracle of God's redemptive work. Nothing less than this creation can save us. We cannot save ourselves. We can by no process of will power, good deeds or instruction ever save ourselves. No plan of salvation other than that ordained by God will be adequate. Church membership is ineffective. Public opinion cannot hold us back from our doom. We keep from doing a lot because of fear of exposure, but we cannot keep from sinning by any other method than recreation. How many have found this out to their sorrow and shame! Temperance, diligence, training, rigid discipline help in worldly matters, but the old nature creeps up and in moments of temptation causes our fall. Like Peter, we need to cry continually, "Lord save me, or I perish." May we have the wisdom to cry out and receive this gift of a Christlike nature formed in a regenerate creature.

TOWARDS MEN.

In righteousness: Holiness and righteousness are two features of the new life. These same virtues were cardinal according to the Old Testament conception of a perfect life. The proof of the new life and the putting on of Christ is in

righteousness and holiness. A large eastern trunk and hand-bag manufacturer advertises with this slogan, "A man is judged by his baggage." How true of a Christian! Our profession is the proof of our life. Changes take place within us, but they do not remain there. The world can and does see. How many would come to Jesus by night and make a secret of their belief while they continue to live in the pleasures of the world. Man is to be like God. God cannot be hidden. Christianity is a life, obedience to God's law and observance of His commandments. It consists in being right and doing right.

Righteousness expresses our attitude towards man as holiness tells of our relationship to God. Justice toward our neighbor grows out of love to God. For love of Him we do what otherwise would be undone. Our righteousness must excel the legal righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. It is not a matter of the law giving permission, or the way being open through closing official eyes to the prohibitions of the law, or being able to warp or match provision of law with provision; it is a question of being right or wrong in God's sight. The law of God will never endanger the soul. It has caused suffering and persecution, but eternal life is the reward. God is not satisfied with less than perfect righteousness. Righteousness in conduct is the fruit of holiness in the heart. Right conduct follows a prayer for Christlikeness. Righteousness includes integrity, honesty, truth, fidelity, absolute fairness, and the second mile. It is superlative righteousness in the eyes of the great lawgiver.

Conduct to others has in it nothing which would cause our attitude toward God to blush or fear to own His name. Adam and Eve hid in the garden of Eden when afraid to face the accusing eyes of God. If a soul can stand naked in the sight of God, without blushing, all is well. Righteousness betokens a just relation among the powers of the soul within and our tasks towards man and duties without. It takes the lie out of our life. Sin lurks in the shadows. Right never loves darkness. Light is the air it breathes and by which it thrives. A test of the rightness of an act is frequently its ability to be told from the housetops without comment or injury to the

persons concerned. Righteousness never needs to have all the curtains drawn. It does not shut doors and live in deserted places. Christ's life was an open book. He withdrew for prayer and communion with the Father, but not for fear of exposure. No one ever passed by and saw Jesus doing anything out of keeping with His prayers, parables, sermons, or instructions. How many lessons, sermons, articles, stories, editorials, books, words of advice and prayers are nullified because they are from the lips and not from the heart!

TOWARD GOD.

And true holiness: As righteousness is external, so holiness is internal. As one is an expression toward mankind, so the other faces God; the first is a branch, the second is the sap of the limb. One talks in life, the other defines the heart. Both are moral in their spheres.

Paul uses two words for holiness. One expresses sanctification which is characteristic of saints; the other is a type of behavior, a reverent mind, a soul full of the law and love of God—devout, upright and Godlike. The latter would appear by context to be in the mind of the writer. The gospel is truth, for it tells of Him who was the truth. Holiness is of the heart in contrast to the ceremonial and ineffective holiness of the Jews. Holiness is piety, right dispositions and bearings towards God. Purity of heart and life is implied. Minute following of Christ is imperative.

Truth is related to holiness and righteousness. Regard for the truth of the gospel produces holiness. We must be "a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate (Titus 1:8)," and "holily and justly and unblameably (I Thess. 2:10)." "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." "What do ye more than others?"

XXV.

GLORIFYING GOD BY TRUTH

"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor; for we are members one with another."

—EPH. 4:25.

LOGICAL CHRISTIANITY.

Wherefore: This is a great word with Paul. His argument is relentless. The old man apart from Christ had certain characteristics. The new life in Jesus demands separation from lying, stealing, hatreds, an unforgiving spirit and other traits commonly associated with all men outside of Christ. The believer does not walk like the Gentile unbeliever. Christ changes life. The standards of conduct of the church do not permit these things. The great gap which some day shall separate heaven and hell must show itself in our present earthly life. God commands aloofness from evil. Evil communications corrupt good manners. The proof of the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit is our ability to put off falsehood, angry passions, selfish motives, uncharitable purposes and dishonest practices. As MacPherson defines it, "The rule is not merely, do to others as you would have others do to you, but do to others what Christ has done for you." Paul now proceeds to list a few of the habits we are to put away from us, describes what are to take their place and gives the motive for our conduct. Paul rarely gives an arbitrary rule. What an ideal parent he would have made.

DETEST FALSEHOOD.

Putting away lying: We lay the false aside once and for all. The break is as definite as the severing of a limb. Sinful principles and practices are to be renounced and abandoned permanently when we follow the Master. A new creation

takes place. The filthy garment of the old man is not concealed, covered, dyed, or laid aside, but destroyed. The regenerated man puts away lying of all sorts.

There may be a thousand forms of lying. The whitest lie becomes black in the eyes of God. Every form of deception is to be put away. A lie devitalizes the blood of truth by infusing a poisonous element. The object of the lie may "be small enough to put in your vest pocket, but it may be as big as a pyramid." Dr. Talmadge for convenience and clarity classified lies into those of agriculture, commerce, mechanics, society and the church. Nature never lies. A rose is always a rose. A peach-pit never produces a walnut tree. A stalk of wheat never becomes barley. God wants man, His highest, last creation, to be as faithful in displaying to the world the source of our life and being. Man hopes for gain by the adulteration of nature's products. He waters milk, mixes silk, cotton and wool, preserves eggs, places the best fruit on the top of the basket, and seeks to make sales by process of deception. Put away lying as a child of God. Great signs display, "Selling below cost," "Going out of business," "Safe and dependable securities." The merchant knows in his own heart the falsity of the statement, yet he hopes to catch some simple soul in this alluring web. He sees a single sale, not a lifelong customer; sharp practices are substituted for pure honesty.

Machines are placed upon the market advertised to perform incredible feats. They may be worth all they cost, but deception is contrary to the ethics of Christ. Pledges are made for the publicity given them and the self-satisfaction which is received from an approving public, yet the pledger has no thought of ever paying all, or more than a small part of the pledge. Society is saturated with practices which pass in social usage but leave heartaches behind them as they violate the golden rule. "Kindest regards" are sent to those who are despised. We are "not at home" to those who are undesirable for various reasons of the moment. How superficial are these substitutes for the real and genuine. How hollow their tones re-echo like words in an empty hall. "Seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds (Col. 3:9)," lie not,

either by life, word, dress or manner. As a pauper loves to appear as a millionaire, so the poverty-stricken soul longs to bask in the sunshine of goodness and truth. Satan tempts us to appear with a goodness we do not possess.

The early Christian church found it hard to break from practices which were common, not only among those who were religious, but also among the heathen deities themselves. The high standards of the Christian church are not easy to attain. The Jews had learned (Prov. 12:22) that "lying lips are an abomination to the Lord," yet Christ had to denounce lying weights and measures. Have we advanced far beyond Christ's day and Paul's day? We may have developed from crude, open lying, but do we have pretty names for the old evil? All forms of lying are related to sin, whether they be statements with evil intent to destroy character and reputation, or idle jests to give a laugh and cause the embarrassment of the one who is the point of the jest to afford amusement to a company; or malignant backbiting which results in broken friendships and business relationships; or the so-called trifling deceptions of polite society, or false statements of children, criminals, and employees made through fear of discipline, punishment, penalties, or losses; the vagaries of inaccurate memories which have no desire to depart from actual fact, yet are helpless; vivid imaginations incapable of restrains and confinement to realities which highly color and exaggerate the slightest basis of fact into a vivid narrative; insincerity of a deliberate nature, or that careless use of words due more to exhaustion, weakness, indifference, and illness than actual intent. Great harm is done by any or all forms, regardless of the motive. The Bible is very explicit in its statement concerning the absence of liars in heaven. Lying is a detestable vice—one to be shunned. The truth is always desirable in news, advertising, selling and buying, writing, speaking, imaginations and rumor. Can you imagine the situation when an SOS call is responded to by a vessel which, at great loss of time and expense, turns from its course only to find when arriving at the supposedly disabled vessel that all is well—that the SOS was merely a practical joke or a publicity stunt. Loss of reputation is expensive to child or adult, teacher or

pupil, customer or merchant, voter or politician. The Christian must be depended upon to tell the truth under all circumstances. Only so does he progress towards sainthood.

The question arises: Is a lie ever justifiable? In case of serious illness or an incurable disease, is it better to extend hope or tell the bitter news? The truth would always seem to have Scriptural sanction. A soul which is given to the Lord cannot be frightened by knowing that death is near, even though the plans of a lifetime are shattered. Time may be desired to bring those who remain to a certain knowledge of the Lord and caution them to so live that the family circle remains complete in heaven, but the announcement can bring no other reply than "For me to die is gain." "Seeing we are also compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us (Heb. 12:1)." The first sign of the new life is a desire to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

A DAILY EXERCISE.

Speak every man truth: The truth we are to speak is the gospel truth without distortion, exaggeration or diminution. The believer is known by his words of truth which are in Christ Jesus. It is necessary to be able to quote scripture accurately if God's word is to have power. The dotting of an "i" and the crossing of a "t" are important. The whole meaning of a passage may be altered by punctuation, emphasis or removal from context. Inaccurate Scripture is false Scripture. By carelessness we give the lie to the truth of the gospel. Hodge declares that "the obligation of veracity rests on intrinsic excellence of truth, on the command of God and on the rights of our fellow-men." The prophet Zechariah speaks bluntly and comprehensively: "These are the things that ye shall do: Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates: And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbor; and love no false oath: for all these are things that I hate, saith the Lord (8:16, 17)." The Bible condemns any departure from the truth. We always have the privilege of changing our minds for the better. An allegory or parable is

not a departure from the truth. Concealment of truth is not approved even though good may come of it. For example, the mother of Moses hid her son, who became the benefactor of Israel.

The truth which is in Christ and the Bible is the norm by which all knowledge is to be tested. The world has a perfect right to expect the follower of the Nazarene to be trusted to the limit. His word should always be as good as his bond. The spirit of Christ lives in him, and daily checks harmonize with the teachings of the holy Word of God. Though we are not perfect, the obligation to exactness in the truth is expected. God knows the truth about ourselves. We are sinners saved by grace. In His eyes, all deception falls away. He sees what we are not, what we pretend to be, what we would like to be or would lead others to believe we are. Seeing ourselves in the light of Him who is the truth, we have a duty to lead others into the light that blinded eyes may see the necessity for the blood of the Cross in their lives. We must believe the truth and silently live the truth. As a rose proclaims itself a rose by its fragrance, we must speak the truth. We are witnesses for Christ. We are to confess Him before men if He is to confess us before our Father which is in heaven.

Speak every man therefore truth with his neighbor, for the sake of his own soul, for the sake of his neighbor and for the sake of the kingdom of God. Our speech proves the mind within and the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. A turn of a hydrant proves whether the water be red with rust, black with mud or clear, pure and lifegiving. "Speak the truth in love." Love is the dress for truth and the atmosphere in which it is to be spoken. No harm can ever come from truth spoken in love of Christ and love for Christ. You can say in anger, "You are on the road to perdition. You are lost," and a sinner may flee because of your warning. But if you lovingly entreat a return unto Him who, by rebirth, can renew our hearts in the Lord, the welcome truth may also save a soul. Cancer is not a fact to be shielded. Let the truth be immediately known and steps may be taken to ward off its tena-

cious grip. Jesus saves to the uttermost all who come unto the Father by Him. Tell the world. Proclaim it from the housetops.

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

With his neighbor: The Jew considered only Jews neighbors. The Mohammedan is notorious for feeling particularly free from any sense of obligation to speak the truth except towards a fellow Mohammedan. To him, a lie is not a lie when spoken to a Christian dog. In answer to the question, "Who is my neighbor? (Luke 10:29)" Christ gave the parable of the Good Samaritan. The Bible teaches us to love our neighbor as ourselves. Fellow believers and those of the household of faith claim our first attention, then all unbelievers who are potential believers. Christ died for all humanity. The disciple cannot lie to either those without or those within. The church is not a close corporation with blessings confined to a narrow circle. God sends the rain upon the just and the unjust. Speak truth to the inner circle and also the outer group. Only by such a method can the world be won for Christ. Disappointed in the unreality of the supposedly real, despairing because the distant city took away an inheritance, disillusioned and seeing that the Father's house is after all the only home and the only life worth living, the prodigals of all time will come back. Truth needs only time to substantiate it. The whitewash will peel, veneer will warp, the shifting foundations bring cracks and bulging walls, mortar disintegrates, but the truth stands as eternal as God Himself. Praise God! Sift out falsehood and lies, and seek to make the world one family of the household of faith.

MOTIVE.

For we are members: Paul is careful to give a motive for right conduct. He seldom gives a negation without giving a positive and a motive for the desired step. Lying is to be put away. Truth is to be sought and spoken of to our own family and to those who are without. We are all intimately related. All belong to the same human family, created by God in His

own image. All who accept Him as a personal Savior are members of the body of Christ, united to Christ, and a living part of Him. The church of Christ is the body of Christ. How can one member of the body be at war with another member of the body, or one brother be an enemy of another brother? The church is a unity. Harmony must reign. A community interest exists. If we are to be like Him we need each other to walk as companions beside us. Full surrender can best be accomplished when a house is not divided against itself. Parents and children must stand together if Jesus' will is done in each and all. How sad is the situation where only the father or the mother or a single child are saved! The body of Christ is one spiritual organization. We may be divided into denominations and corporations; separate boards may function; denominational fields may be allotted at home and abroad for convenience, efficiency and economy, but never let us forget the unity of Christ's body. He is not divided. We must have the unity which comes from a common possession of the truth.

MUTUAL CONFIDENCE

One of another: The human race has been incorporated by God into a common group. Our Interests are common. "We being many are one body in Christ (Rom. 12:5)." Each one is important to the other (I Cor. 12:12-27). When we tamper with truth we injure the whole community. A lying child brings disgrace upon its family. An untruthful pastor injures his church and the cause of Christ. Police who shelter wrong or close their eyes to it, harm the city which supports them and drive decent people to seek other residences. Whoever heard of a hand deceiving a tongue. The hand feels a hot baked potato, so refuses to place it in the mouth until it has cooled. The ear, knowing of danger from an approaching train or car, warns the feet not to go further until the train or car has passed. Death to the foot is death to the whole body. We are all members of the body of Christ and need each

other. It may seem unimportant whether we speak the truth or not, but things are important in relation to the whole. A single thread in a stocking seems of no consequence, but break it and a run soon disfigures the whole. It takes every grain of sand to make a beach. It takes all Christians to make a church. Every follower of Jesus must speak the truth which is in Him and which is His.

John Carroll, whom Detective Burns called the most dangerous criminal of his day, was converted and became superintendent of a mission on the site of one of his former dives at No. 8, Bowery, New York. "O God," he cried, "give me a chance; nobody else will." Put away lying, deception, and glorify God by the truth.

XXVI.

THE VICE AND VIRTUE OF ANGER

"Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath." —EPH. 4:26.

RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION.

Be ye angry: There is a noble and ignoble anger, a necessity for anger and also a danger in anger. We are not to indulge in this passion without the full realization of the harm which can come from its improper use. Poisons are occasionally used as medicines, but this does not recommend them for all medicinal purposes. Paul cautions us against allowing anger to be an occasion for sinning by leaving an open door for Satan to enter and take possession. Having shown us dangers, he enlightens us concerning righteous Christian passion. Many times Paul felt the force of this emotion; he had learned when to loosen the reins for absolute freedom and when to hold them in check. Christ had given an example; the cleansing of the temple necessitated a violent demonstration; soft words had been ineffective, calm speech would have met with ridicule, God was being dishonored, the temple was desecrated, man was losing his soul; in justice, therefore, to the Heavenly Father whom He was representing on earth, man for whom he was so soon to die, and the temple which typified the dwelling-place of God, the emergency called for not only righteous indignation, but also violent upturning of the money changers' tables and driving from the temple area those whose love of gold had led them to violate this sacred section. In this displeasure, Christ was protesting against the evil and not against the persons committing the evil. He wanted them to see it was wrong which He could not excuse or permit.

This act of Christ was no minor irritation, display of ill temper or loss of control because of personal pique. Loyalty

to the truth, His sense of the fitness of things and His love for God compelled Him to let the world know the wrong which was being permitted and tolerated with apparently no protest or effectual objection. The third Chapter of Matthew gives a bitter denunciation of the sins of the scribes and Pharisees; their love of the world was greater than their love of God. Religion was confining itself to ceremony, the laws of God were being broken without any twinges of conscience, the souls of men were being lost by the wholesale; it became necessary therefore to denounce the wrong in no uncertain terms. Christ was a master of direct and plain speech, He never beat about the bush. He did not indulge in glowing phrases or feats of rhetoric, He told them the folly of their actions; blind were leading the blind and God was holding them responsible; they knew what was right and what was wrong. The Old Testament in their possession was familiar and clear, the Ten Commandments were known by every Jew.

There were certain conditions which Christ's representatives must condemn or be false to their trust. Law must be respected; the church exists to preach the gospel. It is not a social agency or educational institution. Its primary function is to seek and save those that are lost. Its task is to proclaim the Word of God, speaking both judgment and doom for lost souls and also rewards and satisfaction for right conduct. Christians have no right to love or be indifferent to that which Christ hated; a hatred for what God Himself detests is proper. The Old Testament refers to God's just anger. Yet God knows no sin and cannot sin. As there is a just anger in the heart of God and as Christ Himself displayed this temper without violating His office as the Savior of the world, we too have a similar obligation to rise against iniquity, to point out sin, to boldly denounce that which is contrary to the laws of God and man. The Christian has the standard of conduct. There can be no deviation. The law of man can never rise above the law of God; the law of man controls earthly movements of citizens, but the laws of God determine the eternal destiny of the soul.

Very seldom in this day and generation do we find laws of God contrary to the laws of man; it is more common to see

the laws of man contrary to the laws of God. In this case, we must be bold to proclaim God's wish even though it may incur the displeasure of man. Even a hardened criminal believes in his heart that there is a God and he inwardly fears the just punishment of God even more than he loves the wealth he seeks by graft, illegal means or force. "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." We are not asked to crush anger, but only to watch it, to keep it under control and to be sure that it is worthy of God. It must have no elements of ill humor, hatred or a sense of personal injury. Righteous anger has its origin in an enthusiasm for righteousness.

We might very seriously question whether we are good Christians unless there are times when we become thoroughly angry. When ashamed of the boldness of evil, conscious of graft, the perpetration of wrong, criminal practices, flagrant evil, and unjust discrimination, we can vehemently protest from a sense of duty and loyalty to God. We must hate evil above all else for we cannot serve God and mammon. It was this sense of wrong which caused Luther to manifest himself to the point of white heat and hurl his bolts of invective against the wrongs of his day. Any quiet, ordinary sermon would have been quite harmless. In his day, Cromwell did for England what Luther did for the church of *his* day. Only this tremendous stirring arouses people to a sense of their danger. The soul that sinneth shall die; the nations that sin shall perish. History is a record of the rise and fall of nations which have lived without God. Christ distinguished between evils against ourselves and against God. When it became necessary to help those who were defenseless, Jesus became a tower of strength, and a terror to His opponents. He was God's voice on earth.

On the occasion of a certain dispute, Sir George Lewis, the famous lawyer, once said, "It is a pity Gladstone puts so much heart and irritability into business. Now I am as cool as a fish." On which Lord Morley remarks, "The worst of being as cool as a fish is that you never get great things done, you effect no improvements, you carry no reforms against the lethargy or selfishness of men and the tyranny of old custom."

When displaying even righteous anger, we must always guard lest ourselves and our cause be lost through lack of self-control. Lifelong friendships have been broken by a hasty word; harm is done by cowardly hurling of anger against the absent. Anger must be servant and never master.

BEAR NO MALICE.

And sin not: Here is the vice of anger. Paul is thinking of those whose blood is hot and excited, those exasperated and thoroughly provoked, who, actuated by injury, pride or love of self, give vent to an uncontrolled tirade unconscious of their words; being provoked into cursing, revilings and reproach and eventually treasuring revenge and malice in self-defense. Whenever anger becomes the expression of a wounded personality, it is sinful; it shows that Christ is not in command. We speak not because His Spirit is within us or from a desire to speak as Christ spoke, but to follow personal inclination. Our anger is not to break out into bitter revilings and malicious desire. "For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God (Jas. 1:20)." Anger is named (Gal. 5:20) as a work of the flesh whose indulgence gives eventual place to the devil and excludes the perpetrator from heaven. There is no anger in heaven. We are instructed to put away "bitterness, evil speaking, reviling, malice."

Anger becomes a sin when it expresses an aggravated personal injury or when it is permitted to vocalize itself in uncontrolled indignation desiring retaliation. Anger if expressed must be under control. At times a sense of justice compels protest, but unless these violent forces are kept under leash they consume the user as well as those against whom they are hurled. Anger, like gunpowder, is capable of blasting away the defenses of evil, destroying the approaches of temptation, and shattering our own health and pleasure as well as the happiness of others.

Unfortunately, some seem to be born with a temper; the small child displays it; it needs to be curbed lest it grow beyond control. Only the love of Christ is able to place a bridle upon it, and make something good, instead of evil from

its exercise. Righteous anger is a stimulant, but uncontrolled anger is destructive; it makes life hard and unbearable, destroys the ability to be kindhearted, forgiving, and loving, and it inflicts pains and losses.

There are numerous Old Testament illustrations of just anger. Moses went angrily from Pharaoh's presence to arouse the children of Israel and begin the march to the sea (Ex. 11:8). Moses, descending from the mount from which he obtained the Ten Commandments, drew near the camp of Israel, saw the idolatrous worship of the golden calf, "waxed hot," broke the stones of the law just received, but aroused Israel to the sense of their sin against God (Ex. 32:19). Elijah and the minor prophets displayed frequent anger against those who displeased God; only so could they save God's chosen people and perpetuate that line which in the fullness of time gave forth Christ. We read (II Pet. 2:7) that Lot's soul was "vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked"; Paul (II Cor. 7:9) refers to a holy indignation against the sin, vice and unbridled passions of his time; he hated evil as the Lord hated evil. Anger in him was like the oil which gives edge to steel. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city (Prov. 16:32)."

That which causes anger to be a vice is an excess of self-consciousness. When we think more of ourselves and our comforts and feelings than we do of the law of God and of right, we become overbearing, sullen, listless, discontented, and over sensitive toward injuries, imagined or real. When we do not have the Spirit of Christ we derive satisfaction in posing as martyrs who are unappreciated and misunderstood; we forget Christ's constant, never-failing ability to bear the indignities, insults, reproaches and epithets which were hurled against Him by those unable or unwilling to understand Him or His teaching. When we follow in His footsteps we think only of glorifying Christ by our conduct. It makes no difference whether we are understood or not, honored or cursed, ignored or preferred; Christ must be all things to all men.

If we are going to follow the Master, it will help us to

keep the far reaching consequences of anger in mind. Knowledge of the terrible death of poison produces fear and care lest by error poison be taken; mindful of the irreparable damage caused by bursts of anger in the disruption of warm friendships we are to be constantly on guard lest we let open the pandora box of evils which anger releases. "Anger closes hearts, checks faith and confidence, takes away the sweetness of life, destroys peace." It drives Christ from the door. St. Basil describes it accurately when he says, "Anger changes men into a brute animal, a wild beast, a rabid dog, a stinging scorpion, a serpent that bites and kills. Jeremy Taylor says, "It makes a man's body monstrous, deformed, contemptible; the voice horrid, the eye cruel, the face pale or fiery; the gait fierce, the speech clamorous and loud. It is neither manly nor ingenious."

PUT AWAY ANGER.

Let not the sun go down upon your wrath: The Pythagoreans had a rule, when angry, to shake hands before the sun set. As the Jewish day began at sunset, they put that as the time limit beyond which anger was not to exist. Are we able at the close of the day to say "good-bye" to our brother against whom anger has been hurled? Evening is the time to say farewell with dislike, scorn and bitterness forgiven and forgotten. Tomorrow cannot bring a propitious start to our task if the night has been spent in regret, sleepless remorse or unforgiving hatred.

"The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy (Psa. 103:8)." Nothing induces sounder sleep than a conscience undisturbed by the sullen rumblings of a living, tossing hatred and anger. Pray for God's forgiveness, and having been forgiven, grant forgiveness. Anger kept until morning grows and strengthens in bitterness. William the Conqueror commanded the English to rake up their fires and put out their candles at the ringing of the curfew. We are to extinguish anger at the going down of the sun. "Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry; for anger resteth in the bosom of fools (Ecc. 7:9)." "He that is soon angry dealeth fool-

ishly; and a man of wicked devices is hated (Prov. 14:17).” “He that is slow to wrath is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly (Prov. 14:29).” A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger. A wrathful man stirreth up strife; but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife (Prov. 15:1, 18).” “The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water; therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with (Prov. 17:14).” “But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire (Matt. 5:22).” Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice (Eph. 5:31).” “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God (Jas. 1:19, 20).”

XXVII.

SPIRITUAL ALERTNESS

"Neither give place to the devil."

—EPH. 4:27.

ALLOW NO TOE-HOLD.

Neither give place: One of the dangers and evils of cherished anger is its tendency to give place to the devil. Christ is pushed to one side while we brood over, put fuel upon, and fan with an unforgiving spirit the flames of wrath. Both righteous and unrighteous anger should cease with the going down of the sun. Love may need to perform a tender service in binding wounds which have been faithfully produced. How sympathetically Christ tended those who followed Him! How gently He kept them lest the adversary, the devil, pushed his way into an injured pride, a resentful spirit or a wounded affection! To keep our anger during the darkness of night is to surrender the citadel of our heart to the ruler of darkness—the devil.

Neither as individuals, as organizations nor as churches are we to give place to other than Jesus. It is possible by motions, resolutions, trials or mistrials to forget the spirit of Christ and place wedges which split apart what can never be united on earth. It is possible to glue, dowel and fasten a split board to gain strength, but that joining is never as secure or beautiful as the original strength before the crack appeared. Let us remember this in our work for the Master. Christ is to be sole occupant of the heart. To open our heart even the slightest degree is to allow the door soon to be wide open. The devil is like some salesman who ring the bell, put their foot in the partly open door, and are soon in the house. Taylor distinguishes between anger, "Where it is a personal affront, give place; but when it is an affront to Christ, never allow the devil a hair's breadth." When we recall and review

a cause for anger, there is danger of fanning a dying flame into new life and giving Satan an advantage. He finds fertile soil for his evil suggestions of retaliations, hasty action, and ill advised sinful conduct in this mood of resentfulness. We are apt to hastily make vows which ought never to have been uttered; false pride strengthened grows by leaps and bounds. We soon fall from grace. "Giving place" means to give scope or occasion to the devil. Sinful anger opens wide the door, and before the heart is aware of it, Satan has made us a helpless prisoner, and the soul has lost its desire to forgive. When we seek God's mercy and pardon, we are to always feel capable of granting the forgiveness which the Lord's prayer commands, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." "He that hateth his brother . . . knoweth not whither he goeth (I John 2:11)." "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." Hugh Latimer wrote, "Who is the most diligent bishop in England? It is the devil. The most diligent preacher of all others, he is never out of his diocese. He is ever applying to his business. His office is to murder religion, to set up idolatry." The devil poses as an angel of light, but always means evil. The more we yield, the more we will be used to the devil's advantage. We are not obliged to yield to him. It is easier to keep him out than to get him out. "The devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour (I Pet. 5:8)." "Satan has desired to winnow you (Luke 22:31)." He seeks to separate all the good which is in our hearts.

How do we give place to the devil? We give place by not recognizing him as a gay deceiver whose word and glittering promises cannot be trusted. Soft words may have the sting of eternal death. King Canute offered the highest place in his realm to the one who would murder his rival, King Edmund. When the foul deed had been perpetrated, Canute's reward was to hang the murderer from the highest tower in London lest the murderer himself be, some day, a rival to the king. So the devil covers his promises with falsehood. The mind, devoid of good thoughts, is ready to be filled with evil. One evil thought, like a nest egg, is an invitation for more. Satan is always ready to fill empty hands, minds, hearts, and

lives. Guard against spiritual idleness. Activity is one of the sleepless guards which keep watch over our imaginations. Keep busy in service for the Lord lest Satan find a toe-hold. Lost ground is difficult to regain. It is hard to arouse a spent body and spirit.

Hillet, a great Hebrew teacher, once took an indifferent pupil, apparently incapable of habits of study, out for a walk. They came to a stagnant pool outside the city of Jerusalem. The teacher suggested a pause to regain their strength. The student protested. The water was covered with green scum. The air was foul. Disgusting water-snakes were present. The spot offered no attractions or hope of refreshment. Seizing the opportunity of the moment, Hillet, turning to his pupil, said, "Such is the result of still life. The slothful become stagnant like this pool." Christ came to bring the abundant life, and living water. If not filled with good, we are empty for evil. Spiritual indolence allows our conscience to go to sleep at its post. This is the act of a traitor. Absorption in worldly activities which are poor substitutes for lasting pleasure give Satan advantage. No greater joy or more lasting happiness can be found than that which comes from leading a soul to find its Savior. To give a cup of cold water in the Master's name is better than drinking two cups ourselves. The exercise of performing true Christian service is more beneficial and less expensive than memberships in exclusive social clubs and organizations. If more efforts were made to give a friendly hand in the Master's name, there would be less need for worldly forms of exercise which lead to the formation of friends who tempt us to take the first step downward. Under the guise of being a good sport or being a good fellow, many form habits which take them from God and separate them from heaven. "Take heed lest ye fall." "Abstain from appearances of evil."

How are we to resist the devil? Count no sin small and unworthy of notice. Let no trickling stream of momentary pleasure flood our soul with regret and break down the dykes of reserve, obedience to law, respect for God, observance of His Sabbath, belief in His Bible and acceptance of the Word. Of the devil may be said, "To whom we give place by sub-

jection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you (Gal. 2:5)." It helps to have constant absorption in the things of God and desire to live only for Him. Wilfred Grenfell, Sheldon Jackson, Alice Freeman Palmer, William Whiting Borden, David Livingstone, Toyohiko Kagawa, William J. Wanless, Donaldina Cameron, Marcus Whitman, Martha Berry and John Joseph Eagan followed the gleam. Satan was excluded as they entered into the heart of God. Let us follow in their train.

Think of God's great love in sending His only begotten Son to die for a sin-sick world; think of Jesus on Calvary; meditate on the Sermon on the Mount; remember Jesus Christ, a wedding ring, a lock of hair, a picture in a watchcase, a photograph upon the desk, a cross about the neck—all serve as reminders to keep us true to vows and drown out siren voices which would lure us away from our chosen path of duty to destruction. Think of Christ, always ready to help. See the work which cannot be done until Jesus speaks through us. "The fields are now white for the harvest." The laborers are few despite the lives surrendered to fulltime service. Evil is widespread and aggressive. "Pray without ceasing." Recall the prophecies of Scripture concerning the end of the devil and his followers. The day of the Lord is at hand. Be one of the wise, prepared virgins who were willing to await their Lord, regardless of personal inconvenience or delay. Their task was to stand, and, having done all, to stand. This is far harder than to be busy in the routine tasks of life.

UNMASK OUR ADVERSARY.

To the devil: We have no mean antagonist. Satan is as old as the world. We are babes in the word. Why match our inexperience with the world-old experience of the devil? Far better take the advice of God who was from the beginning and has greater wisdom. The Bible is our guidebook, our manual of arms, our handbook, our textbook of defense, our line of attack. Plans for the battle are given in great detail. Do not give place to the devil. If we yield, blame none but ourselves. A Bible, pastor, or church is a modern city of refuge. The

church is a hospital where those wounded by Satan may find strength and health. "Be at enmity, but be so with the devil, and not with a member of thine own," says Chrysostom. "For this purpose it is that God has armed us with anger, not that we should thrust the sword against our own bodies, but that we should plunge the whole into the devil's breast."

Chrysostom. The devil is the ruler of darkness, a gay deceiver, the father of lies (Rev. 12:9). Take your Bible, find all references to the devil, and place them in a column; locate all references to Christ and place them in a parallel column; then choose, this day, whom ye will serve. The devil works only through men. Arm yourself with the sword of the Spirit. "Neither give place to the devil."

XXVIII.

HONESTY AND HONOR

"Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labor, working with his hands, the thing which is good, that he may have, to give to him that needeth." —EPH. 4:28.

THE OLD LIFE.

Let him that stole: The tense may be present as well as past. The early church found many among the early converts who had tasted of all the forbidden fruits, among which was stealing. But now as followers of Christ, former things were to be put away. Stealing was not always listed among the vices. At the time of Homer, 850 B. C., theft was permissible to heroes and gods. The old Spartans taught their children to steal, but the habit was condemned when they were caught. Dishonor did not attach itself to the act but the discovered act. Paul includes here all forms of pilfering, plundering or the acquiring of goods by other than honest means approved by the law of God. A silence in man's laws, official failure to enforce the law or a division of the spoil among religious, charitable or missionary causes, does not excuse or soften the word of practice. The cause of stealing is not considered. Lack of employment, ill health, poverty, dire needs of members of the family, mental sickness, excessive surplus in the hands of others, the character of the one robbed, the ease with which stealing may be done—none of these reasons can justify a practice contrary to the laws of God. Professing Christians may not steal in delicate or accepted manner of any form lest they be separated from God. A thief cannot inherit the kingdom of God (I Cor. 6:10).

What is stealing? We condemn the common thief who enters a home or store and the robber who breaks open the safe of a bank; the law imposes upon him a prison sentence

supposedly in proportion to his crime. But what about the more refined form of taking what is not ours by purchase, gift, or barter? What shall we say of such unjust gains as are apparent in bankruptcies due to carelessness and extravagant management, deceit in advertising cheap materials as being the best and imported, fakes as being genuine pieces, reprints as being originals, false weights as being an honest pound, diluted milk as being pure, adulterated foods as passing inspection? Stealing is stealing and liable to punishment by God. As Gehazi stole and was punished, so will God punish us (II Kin. 5:27). Another form of stealing is found in withholding just dues and wages. "The wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until morning (Lev. 19:13)." To borrow and not return may be a form of stealing. "The wicked borroweth and returneth not again." Using for personal uses what has been given us in trust is stealing, even though there may be an intent to repay. Having a part in a transaction dealing with stolen articles shares the guilt. Buying cars known to have been stolen encourages the stealing of more cars. Hotels tell a sad story of guests who take towels, mats, blankets, sheets and whatever can be removed. Children are called minors who should pay full fare. How frequently bus fares are skipped unless the conductor detects the omission. Under the guise of souvenirs and mementos much vandalism is committed. Churches are robbed of hymn books and choir music. God is robbed by dissipation of the use of a healthy body needed to do His will. Shall no mention be made of the one who robs another of his most priceless possession—virtue, or the one who by slander takes away from the innocent his good name and casts suspicion and reflection upon another? A good name may be stolen quite as well as gold or possessions. Is a raid upon a neighbor's orchard, vineyard, patch, or piece of timber, a prank or thieving? In withholding tithes we rob God.

PUT AWAY STEALING.

Steal no more: Lax habits before conversion are to be changed to habits of honesty continuously practiced during the whole of our life. In addition, restitution is to be com-

plete. Philemon gives us an account of Onesimus, the runaway slave, who was told to return to his master and prove the sincerity of his repentance by future honest service. Christ enjoined the Ten Commandments with their "Thou shalt not," but with them gave positive assertions and duties to be performed. Hands are not to be idle for Satan to tempt and employ. Paul's mention of the eighth commandment adds another to those listed in this group of verses dealing with prohibitions and positive assertion. If any form of robbery, felony, pilfering, theft, misuse of trust funds, gambling with sacred funds, misrepresentation of values in real estate, or brochures, addresses, obtaining of advantage by false pretense, abnormal and unearned profits, withheld wages, rents, income, or false advertising leading to increased volume of sales, has been indulged in—steal no more. "Sin is not to have dominion over us." "Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin (Rom. 6:6)." The gospel includes thieves, murderers, adulterers and sinners of every degree and kind in its provision for salvation, but only upon the condition that there be an absolute separation from the old life. Roots must be taken out of the old soil and environment; all shoots of the old life need to be removed to give all energy to the new graft. It does not matter what you were before you came to Christ and confessed Him as your Lord, but it does matter a great deal what you are afterward. It matters to yourself, it matters to Christ, it matters to your neighbor. Zacchaeus was tremendously in earnest when, after coming down from the sycamore tree, he said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold (Luke 19:8)."

HONEST TOIL.

But rather let him labor: "Go to the ant thou sluggard; learn of him and be wise." We are to be self-supporting individuals, earning our bread by the sweat of our brow. "If any man would not work, neither should he eat (II Thess. 3:10)." In pre-Christian eras, the dignity of idleness was preached;

after Christ, labor was extolled and idleness condemned. Keep our hands honest and our soul clean by labor. Work preserves the individual and society from corruption. Work is commanded "Six days shalt thou work." God disciplines man by the daily task which is God's yoke to keep us from idleness, lust, passion, pride, tattling, idle gossip and sin. This labor should be honest and good. The bartender, the gambler, the manufacturer and salesman of illegal and sinful devices work. But our task is not in itself or indirectly to contribute to the fall or temptation of another. Keep conscience clear and the soul unspotted. The man works who creates a bomb, but his labor is not approved by Scriptures. Our work is to be intense, we are to be fatigued by effort, it should gain us a livelihood, but above all it must be honest and honorable work. The same hands which stole from another without giving service in return are now to work and earn wages. Idleness and theft go frequently together. Criminals are largely recruited from ranks of the unemployed. As there was formerly an inclination to live by one's wits, so now there must be the steady purpose to travel the happy road of honest work and self-support. The stimulation of toil brings happiness and a song to the heart. The body becomes strong and healthy, the soul clean.

PERSONAL LABOR.

Working with his hands: Our own hands are to be employed in gainful occupation. This phrase cannot be used by those who decry the evil of machines. This is no polemic for the use of simple methods of work and a departure from mass production by machines. Nor does this intimate that employment of brains or sedentary occupations are to be condemned in preference to the use of one's hands. The old self-sustaining home was a happy one. The fireside with its spinning wheel and simple chores in which all members of the family participated had a brightness and peace the modern home with all of its labor-saving devices does not possess. Paul is thinking of the great principle of putting our heart and conscience to our task in the name of God and for His sake. This gives new life and vigor, and brings a wholesome joy from creative

effort. He who labored in the creation of the world gives His creatures an opportunity to enjoy with Him the pleasure of producing transformations with our labors. We have the joy of seeing work develop and progress. We work and live, to give. Idleness is power wasted, time lost and temptation provoking. Except in cases of illness, old age, youth or enforced unemployment we are to support ourselves and not be supported by others. There is enough work to do in the world to give gainful employment to all. Fields are white for the harvest. The Lord always needs laborers. As long as Satan and his angels have freedom, as long as people live apart from God and ignorant of His way of salvation, so long is there work to be done. Work for the night is coming when no work can be done. The church offers unlimited opportunity in times of depression. The Bible can be studied. The lost need to be saved. The prayers of a righteous man may move the world. Work. No need to praise the work of others or envy their success. God is no respecter of persons. Dedicate your hands to the Lord. Consecrate the product of your labor to Him. Follow wherever He leads. To the work.

Paul knew this joy. Tentmaking was his profession, but he was commissioned to be an apostle and a fisher of men. This was his life. Wages were to be shared to the glory of God. When staying with Aquilla and Priscilla, "he abode with them and wrought, for by their occupation they were tentmakers." Personal work could best be done while working. His profits were shared. Writing to the Thessalonians he says, "For we behaved ourselves not disorderly among you, neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you (II Thess. 3:7, 8)." He reminds the Ephesians, "Ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me." If he lacked, his hands were occupied in gaining bread for himself, his companions and those in other communities who were without.

God blesses labor. "The diligent hand maketh rich (Prov. 10:4)." "He that tilleth the ground shall be satisfied (Prov. 12:11)." "The diligent hand shall bear rule (Prov. 12:24)."

"The blessing of the Lord maketh rich (Prov. 10:22)." Let us not therefore be tempted to relax and give way to difficulties. Where there is a will there is a way, especially if we are about the Lord's work. If we are doing God's work, the way will open. Sir William Wanless started with forty cents and built a hospital in India which has a value, today, of a quarter of a million. What will we do?

SELF-INTEREST.

The thing which is good: Employment must be useful, and good. Its intended use should not interfere with anyone's Christian employment. No soul should be lost by the sight of, the ownership of, or the use of it. No good can come of that which is linked with vice or evil. This applies to rent received from space used for evil purposes and income from stocks or bonds which are for the purpose of creating that which God condemns. Ignorance is no excuse. Every Christian owes it to his soul's welfare to investigate not only the ability of a tenant to pay and care for property, the soundness of a corporation and its ability to pay dividends and be secure in times of storm, but also to know the use for which the product is made. The intended purpose must be good. Exceptional bad uses are without consideration. Because a razor is used to commit murder, all razors are not to be condemned. But the deliberate rental of a property for gambling, vice or evil is to be condemned.

GIVE OUR OWN SELVES.

That he may have: We all work to possess, but the object must be beyond this. Prudence is never forbidden. It is proper to accumulate wealth to increase comfort, provide for old age and the reasonable requirements of one's family and dependents or to advance oneself in a chosen profession. But these various objectives should not be used to sell our soul and make a God out of our money. They are never to interfere with a faithful setting aside of the tithe. Firstfruits belong to the Lord. If we faithfully set aside this portion and devote it to the work of God's kingdom, we will always be ready to perform our charitable obligations. Our first duty is

to provide for necessary requirements of ourselves and our families. "Now them . . . we command and exhort . . . that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread (II Thess. 3:12)." "Study to be quiet, and to do your business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; and that ye walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing (I Thess. 4:11,12)." Our second duty is to help others. This will not lessen our care for our families. The Lord will allow none to suffer lack by doing His will. He who cares for the sparrow and the lily of the field will also care for us in all things. God has ordained that planted seed shall increase thirty fold, sixty fold, or a hundred fold. Plant a grain of wheat and you obtain over 300 grains, or plant a kernel of corn and 700 kernels are not an unusual harvest. Shall God do for the wheat or corn more than He does for man, His highest creation?

THE USE OF SURPLUS.

To give: The profit motive is never to be the prime motive. We work to do that which is good. We work that we may have. But we do not stop here. How many do? We are to have in order that we may give. Not by chance when there happens to be a surplus, when all bills have been paid and nothing else is to be purchased; not when the mortgage is paid and all the installments are clear. We are not to wait to give our tithe until we have a clear title. By that time, desire to give shall have been lost. Treasures are to be laid up in heaven by our tangible gifts of gold, silver, checks and money. Some give pledges never intending to redeem them; some place a value upon their services to the church and call this their contribution to the church while keeping all wages for selfish purposes. A tithe is God's rule of separation. Nothing less will satisfy God. "Will a man rob God?"

Before, some have taken dishonestly; now by labor they are to give from their bounty. "It is more blessed to give than to receive." "I have shewed you all things how that by laboring ye ought to support the weak." At times this giving is to be in the form of restitution (Luke 19:8), for the man

who has ever defrauded. Our motive for honest work is to possess in order to give to him that lacketh. Henry Ford's care in creating reserves to protect his investments and build a surplus has not forbidden generosity to his employees. Some prefer to give one-tenth to the Lord immediately. Some wait and leave large endowments by will. Great danger lies in the latter course. No man knows the day nor the hour when the Son of Man will call for him. How many good intentions are lost, how many wills are broken. A benefactor who wills his intentions misses seeing the happiness his gifts produce. The Lord suggests paying as we go. Give the Lord the first fruits. Peabody made it a rule to never spend more than three thousand dollars upon himself; the rest belonged to others.

THE OBJECT OF LABOR.

To him that needeth: Any one in want is to be the recipient of our tithe. A cup of cold water is to be given in the Master's name. One needs, another supplies. Those unable to work through no fault of their own are entitled to support by those who can share. Children have an obligation towards their own family and kin. Blood is thicker than water. But the family is not to absorb more than its share. God so loved the world that He gave freely and equally to all. Shall we, His children, do less. No man liveth unto himself. The Lord sends His rain, air, sunshine, night and day, and the beauties of nature upon the just and the unjust. Shall we show greater discrimination? Have we any right to limit our gifts to Christians? Christ at times healed before forgiving sin. An empty stomach is poor soil for gospel truth. Begin with the household of faith, but give to all. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith (Gal. 6:10)." "Industry is not only the instrument of improvement, it is also the foundation of pleasure."

XXIX.

CLEANSED SPEECH

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." —EPH. 4:29.

DANGEROUS SPEECH.

Let no corrupt communication: Paul follows his method of giving first a negative and then a positive. Remove corrupt speech, cleanse it of all foulness and then fill it with truth, goodness and grace. The cleansing must be complete and leave not a particle of the old sinful nature. A drop of sour milk will spoil any sweet milk in a pan. Filthy and unclean words are poison to the souls of others. Proceeding from an evil heart they can do inestimable damage to others' minds and speech. Words are like germs of contagious disease when they lodge in susceptible minds. The one who spreads evil conversation is as seldom conscious of the extent of injury done as the carrier of disease is of the person receiving disease from contact with him.

Corrupt means disobedience, idle, loose, impure, disobedient, licentious, evil, bad, enticing, foul, offensive, injurious, worthless, useless, words having no possible good use. The word corrupt is applied in the Bible to spoiled fruit or fish or a tree bearing useless fruit. Corrupt speech may have the same characteristics and result as corrupt, putrid, rotten and spoiled fruit. These words may be expected from the pagan or non-Christian, but not from a believer who should engage in Christ-like conversation because his heart has been changed. A sweet fountain does not eject bitter water or foul liquid. The Holy Spirit is a cleansing agent.

By our words shall we be justified or condemned. Christ was very positive in saying account must be given for every idle word. Guard against the possession of the "throat

which is an open sepulchre (Psa. 5:9),” and the life which is “full of uncleanness ((Matt. 23:27).” Such utterance injures the user, the hearers, and grieves the Holy Spirit of God. Only the abiding Divine presence can prevent such a catastrophe. Corrupt speech is like salt that has lost its savor. The Bishop of Mona, after a period of self-examination, exclaimed, “Preserve me, O God, from vain conversation.” He desires freedom from the habit of flattery, insincerity, vain boasting, light banter, ridicule, malice, hatred, passionate and irreverent words which ill fit the lips which God formed to speak His praise and to be carrying agents of the gospel hope. Corrupt conversation takes God’s name in vain, speaks contemptuously of God, His Sacred Word, and the church which is His body. It is full of obscenity and evil. “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies; these are the things which defile a man (Matt. 15:19).” “The tree is known by its fruit. . . . A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned (Matt. 12:33-37).” “But now ye also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communications out of your mouth, Lie not to one another (Col. 3:8, 9).” “The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature: and it is set on fire of hell (Jas. 3:6).” Who can measure the mischief of a talebearer, distorting the truth, inflaming without just cause, spreading disease with no power to heal, and separating not only self but also other precious souls from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

CLEANSE THE SPRING.

Proceed out of your mouth: The new creation kills old desires, breaks old habits, removes the wish to gain a laugh at the expense of pain or contamination to another. “Not

that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man (Matt. 15:11).” “Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep the door of my lips (Psa. 141:3).” Considering the good and evil of which it is capable, the tongue is a great responsibility. The tongue may be a man’s glory; with it he may glorify God, the Savior, and edify self. The tongue should be dedicated to the glory of God by its use in praise, prayer and testimony. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Rom. 10:17).” Speech may lead a lost soul to the throne of grace where salvation may be found. “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh (Matt. 12:34).”

St. Augustine engraved upon his table these words, “There is no place at this table for any one who loves scandal.” James placed the ability to control speech as a test of faith in Christ, “If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but delivereth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain (Jas. 1:26).” “The tongue can no man tame. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison (Jas. 3:8).” Spurgeon used to say if all men’s sins were divided into two bundles, one-half would be sins of the tongue. The heart must be cleansed by the precious blood of Jesus if the tongue is to be clean and fit for the Master’s use. A thoroughly converted person is eager to please the Lord in all things. While evil words may come frequently to the lips, they are submerged by the words of Jesus. Memorize the Sermon on the Mount and the sayings of Jesus which are as valuable as priceless pearls. Why toy with paste pearls when the genuine may be possessed, or plated ware when sterling is ours in great abundance? If anger, resentment, pique, cause words to come to the tip of the tongue, bring them into subjection and prevent their utterance which may do irreparable damage. When God has His finger on the trigger, there are fewer injuries.

Various rules for the development of good conversation have been given. (1) Silence is good security. It gives time for mature thought and riper judgment. It is easier to keep a prisoner behind bars than to capture him after an escape. Keep our evil thoughts prisoners behind the bars of a conse-

crated conscience. Govern and train the tongue to silence. (2) Turn trivial conversation to subjects of real worth. This is never easy. It requires consummate tact, dedication and knowledge of spiritual things. Too much conversation is limited to eating, drinking, diversion, clothing, success and idle gossip. Too little is spent in serious, helpful, God-centered intercourse. No man knows the day nor the hour when the silver cord of life shall break. Eternity faces us all. The love and mercy of God is a subject of vital and real interest. (3) Speak not from self glory or for the destruction of another. Be constructive. Familiarity with God's word and the great chapters of comfort, salvation and life always start talk in the right direction. (4) Speech and life should always match. What value is great zeal in prayer, faithful attendance at church services, if the family cannot live with you or employees find it impossible to work under you? Speech and good works are a pair of oars. Both need to be used together if progress is to be made. (5) Stop evil speech of all kinds. To talk is to water a plant the destruction of which is sought. To give expression to evil gives it added strength and life.

HELPFUL CONVERSATION.

But that which is good: Wrong words are to be removed to give place to that which is good. Every weed in a garden endangers the crop, taking space, nourishment, light and profit from the garden. The positive element in Christian speech is: Speak only that which is good. Be constructive, not destructive. Tear down, but be sure to build up. Common labor may demolish a palatial mansion which only skilled workmen can erect. It is not enough to cease from evil and keep quiet; say something good about a person. Not injuring another's reputation is inadequate. We are to speak the good; to utilize every opportunity to be helpful; to carefully cultivate the capacity for gracious, helpful speech as a musician, by hourly exercise upon the keyboard, develops the skill of a master. That which is good is here contrasted with that which is good for nothing.

Words are edifying and useful when they are addressed to God in confession of guilt, pleading for mercy and pardon, and when they are addressed to point fellow-men to the Savior. This fulfills the purpose of speech. The tree praises God by its beauty. Man praises God by the use of his lips. We acquire the ability to talk and master language to praise Him. Learning brings us near to the heart of God. "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit . . . every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire (Matt. 7:17,19)." "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man (Col. 4:6)."

A MOTIVE FOR USEFUL CONVERSATION.

To the use of edifying: Speech is edifying when it is used to upbuild faith, establish purity, strengthen and help one in need of assistance. Good conversation is an instrument in the hands of the Lord to benefit the wills, hearts and decisions of others. Words need to be seasonable if they are to edify. There is a time to sow and a time to reap. Operations are sometimes performed in emergencies, but usually favorable moments and conditions are sought. Success justifies careful planning and removal of all known elements of probable failure. So with speech and the soul. Timely reproof, well directed and given in Love for God and the one reproofed, is like an operation carefully, skillfully and successfully performed. As Christians we are to establish hearers in the faith by increasing their knowledge of heavenly things. We are cautioned (Matt. 7:6) not to cast pearls before swine, nor to speak in the ears of fools who will despise our words. The disciples entered cities in which it was useless for them to preach at that time. The dust of these homes was to be cast from their feet. Seed will not grow on stones, or parched and unbroken ground. In the western prairies, where rain does not fall for months, advantage is taken of dry spells to plow and get the soil ready for seed time and rain. Words on even the most sacred themes and with the best of conse-

crated purpose may do harm rather than good. There is a time for all things. It is necessary to wait in cataract operations until the cataract has ripened if the operation is not to be repeated. There is a fullness of time in Christian testimony. There is an hour for fishing, other seasons waste bait, time and temper.

"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another (Rom. 14:19)." "Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification (Rom. 15:2)." "But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation and comfort Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church Let all things be done unto edifying (I Cor. 14:3, 12, 26)." Words spoken for edification are like nails driven in the right place to hold separate pieces securely together.

SEASONED WITH GRACE.

That it may minister grace: This implies both grace in word and deed. It covers the whole field of moral, physical and spiritual welfare. It gives strength which builds up. Its characteristics are graciousness, blessing and spiritual benefit. Pleasure and profit are conferred. We are used by God to administer grace, to bring pleasure and profit. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

We are to speak as the spirit gives us utterance, to be as the apostles, "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom (Acts 6:3)," encouraging, warning and stimulating the hearer with words of life from God's written Word. To give grace, our words must be such as God may bless and such as may bring the careless to a knowledge of God. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord (Col. 3:16, 17)." "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee (I Tim. 4:16)." "These words—which I command thee shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently

unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way and when thou liest down and when thou risest up (Deut. 6:6, 7).” Speech is to be a gracious ministry comparable to the service rendered by the Good Samaritan. It is to bind the wounds of the broken hearted.

CONSIDER WHO HEARS.

To the hearers: Our neighbors and families are to know our beliefs. Prayers are not to possess that ostentation of the Pharisee who prayed on the street corner and from the rooftops to be seen of men. Speech is to have the urge of John the Baptist who with flaming earnestness called all men everywhere to repent. God punishes sin. Those who possess the light are stewards of the manifold grace of God. We make no secret of the cause of our joy. We are not like those prospectors for gold who, discovering a rich vein, dig secretly for their own wealth, fearing lest others may learn the whereabouts of their source of supply. Be like lights upon a hill. Do not cover gospel truth. Think of the condition of those without Christ, then pray that God may give utterance to speak truth without reserve. Be wise as serpents, yet harmless as doves. From the eighteenth century comes this motto, “Let us endeavor to make religious conversation which is in all respects desirable and in some degree fashionable.” Milton catches the importance of even a single word, “A word has changed a character and a character has changed a kingdom.” A word has saved a soul. “Thy sins are forgiven thee; go in peace.” “There is life for a look at the crucified one.” Tell the glad story. We are the voices of Jesus, today. Let us train our voices, as radio announcers do, who wish to excel before the microphone. Exalt speech by placing it as a votive offering before the altar of God.

XXX.

GRIEVING THE SPIRIT

"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." —EPH. 4:30.

GOD MAY BE WOUNDED.

And grieve not: God wishes us to enjoy Him forever. He has made every provision to make this possible. Failure is therefore due to our lack of understanding, our sin, and our deliberate turning from Him. God's holiness and love are grieved, pained and offended by the hardness of our hearts, ingratitude for His tender mercies without number, inconsistency of conduct, speech bitter because of burdens, thoughts frequently approaching blasphemy, jealousy of some temporarily better favored in worldly goods, health or position, and passions, lusts and desires burning within us. God watching over us with unremitting care and striving by means known only to Him to perfect us on earth is grieved by our stubborn opposition and mutterings.

God, as a person, has feelings. Every parent is grieved by rebellious or indifferent children who resent attempts to discipline or attain the best interests of the child. Our heavenly Father is also pained by our dullness and slowness of understanding and appreciation. This pain is not only for sins of the world of which my misdeeds are a part, but also for my individual sins. The pain for my sin is separate from the pain caused by others. Jesus wept over Jerusalem collectively; He was also injured by the disciples' failure to reach their possibilities through Him. Unholy conversations grieve Him who is holy. He is wounded by all that is not holy. Hateful words grieve Him who loves. Sin pleases the devil and wounds the Spirit of God. Unkind, ungenerous words are of the devil. God and Satan cannot be pleased by the same things.

The nearer we live to God the more aware we are of that which grieves Him and the more earnest are our efforts to remove all that is distasteful to Him. We can be calloused to the seriousness of sin. After rebirth, sins which occasioned no previous alarm fill us with remorse; we have no peace until Divine forgiveness is sought and we have made restitution where such is required. The closer we live in communion with God, the more sensitive we are to those things which displease Him and the greater is our desire to be free from evil habits to help others to see the light. Darkness hides what light reveals. The light of the gospel floods our soul with glory. Sin cannot linger in the light.

Grieving God's Spirit does not mean that we are necessarily lost and permanently separated from Him. We are still His children though running great danger of losing communication and communion with Him. We "fall away from grace" by having unconfessed sins and continuing in our sins. A boy is still a son even though he disobey the parent and grieve the father by disobedience. But sympathy, co-operation, and understanding is becoming less and less. Continued disobedience may lead to disowning the child or removing the inheritance. No wise child will turn against the parent upon whom the future depends. No child of God will consciously turn against God, upon whom salvation and eternity with God depends.

We grieve God by separating ourselves from Christ. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." His love was able to forgive and overlook a great deal. His sacrifice is an invitation to come to Him. His death upon the Cross was intended to bring us to a realization of our lost condition apart from Him. He wishes us to duplicate His great love and demonstrate it towards others. In His name we can forgive and have no bitterness, offense or grief towards others. He is grieved by Christians who fail to demonstrate this Christlike attitude, expecting Christ to forgive them but being relentless, stern and aloof from their fellow men who need forgiveness. "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." "How oft did they provoke Him in the wilderness and grieve Him in the desert (Psa. 78:40)." Israel rebelled and

vexed His holy Spirit, so that He was compelled to turn against them, and fight against them (Isa. 63:10). Impure thought desecrates the temple of God (I Cor. 6:19; 3:16, 17), Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the unforgivable sin (Luke 12:10).

We may grieve the Spirit of God in various ways: (1) By resisting this Spirit which tries to lead us to Christ, by continuing in sin, by rejecting the Spirit of God, and taking life into our own hands. (2) By refusing to have the comfort of the indwelling Spirit, and continuing to live in fear, living death, unbelief, separation from Jesus and absence from the church. (3) Restraining prayer and limiting it to our families, ourselves, our community, our friends, and our country. Hurried prayer, occasional prayer, perfunctory prayer, and formal prayer grieves. Prayer is talking with God about deep interests of our soul and the building of God's kingdom on earth. Absent-minded prayer grieves God. (4) Corrupt speech, flippant talk, low levels of thought and action, worldly interests, serving mammon, withholding of tithes, and piety restricted to Sunday publicity, grieve God.

We should not grieve the Spirit which seals us or bring dishonor to His name, lest we rob ourselves of the fellowship which is life itself and lose hope of eternal redemption. Four downward steps are (1) grieving, (2) resisting, (3) quenching, (4) blaspheming the Spirit.

A PERSON.

The holy Spirit of God: There is a question as to whether Paul is referring to the Holy Spirit of God or the third member of the Trinity—the Holy Spirit. God lives in the heart of each believer. He is close enough to know all about us and to be near when we address Him in prayer. Note, the Spirit is here called a person who grieves like a person. Various words are used to describe the power and presence of the Spirit—wind, fire, oil, the breath of God. The Spirit is more than an influence of an ideal. The Spirit is a Person, divine, Godlike, and infinite. Grieving the Spirit may not separate us from God. Men often break friendships and no

longer speak. God's love persists. He loves us even to the end. That is why the thief on the Cross was able to enter Paradise.

Beware of grieving this Spirit. Persistent wounding is disastrous. "Quench not the Spirit of God (I Thess 5:19)," which excites us to God and restrains us from evil, giving us wise and good counsel. Guard against the danger mentioned in Acts, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye (7:51)." The Israelites, by not heeding the words of their commander, died in the wilderness, instead of entering the Promised Land. How many alive today will never enter New Jerusalem because of willful sin, complaint against God and unrepentance! Some "count it a small thing to weary man; but will ye weary God also." "Let Him be your fear and let Him be your dread (Isa. 8:13)." "For God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us His Holy Spirit (I Thess. 4:7, 8)."

A LIVING EXPERIENCE.

Whereby ye are sealed: God is the sealer. The Spirit is the wax. Paul repeats the phrase used in Eph. 1:13, "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." A seal is a mark of ownership, security against theft, and a sign that we are God's. The Father has sealed the Son and us (John 6:27). The Spirit is the element in which we are sealed and with which we are sealed. The Lord knoweth them that are His as a shepherd knows the sheep of his flock. The seal is therefore a sign of our election to be sons of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. It is also a sign of our sanctification and withdrawal from the world. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Certain standards of conduct are expected from us which are different from that of the world. We cannot serve God and mammon. This seal is an indication of our security. We are "kept by the Spirit" from being prodigals and backsliding from grace. We seal a letter because its content is valuable,

and we wish to safeguard its falling into hands other than those for whom it is intended. God seals us to keep our souls from falling into the possession of Satan. He wishes us to be His riches in heaven. If we are kept by this sealing from the world and the things of the world, it is that we might be kept for the Master's use. This seal is a proof of ownership. When a publisher prints a book, he places his name on the title-page. When God, through His Son, reaches and obtains a human heart, He places His mark upon it. The world can tell that we have been with Jesus. This seal is a proof of value. Only those letters are sealed which contain valuable material whose loss would be serious. What is more valuable than a human soul? There is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents. Christ died for the ungodly. When the blood of Christ has done its saving work, the Spirit places its mark upon that soul bought with such a high price. In the eyes of God each soul is precious. Would that every one possessed this seal, and felt new life, hope, happiness and keeping power.

Of this we may be sure—this seal need never be broken except by death when this earthly body releases the soul, infinitely precious and desirable in His sight. We are Christ's jewels, sealed with His mark. We cannot be lost, for we are identified by His mark. The presence of the Spirit brings life, instructs, comforts, consecrates, purifies and seals us safe from all the perils of this life unto the glories of eternity. Second Corinthians brings a challenge, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; Not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart (3:2, 3)."

THE GOAL OF OUR HOPES.

Unto the day of redemption: What a great day that will be when we have been completely redeemed and live with Him forever. This will occur at the general resurrection when those saved by the blood of the Lamb will rise into new life in heaven. It takes place when Christ appears to claim those

who are His, to redeem His purchased possession, to cause us to be like Him in perfection. On this day of redemption Jesus takes the souls of the redeemed home to glory, where they will be forever free from sin and sorrow. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 6:23)." This earthly life ends danger. We need this sealing now if we wish to be kept with Him forever. "They shall be mine in the day that I make up my jewels." Redemption "covers the rescue of God's people from sin's dominion in death, and their elevation to share the glory of Jesus on high." Sealing has been spoken of as having both retrospective and prospective aspects. It looks back to the day of our redemption and sealing by the Holy Spirit when we gave our hearts to the Lord; it looks forward to the day of our resurrection when the journey of life shall have come to its conclusion. It looks backward to Calvary; it looks forward to heaven. The seal is broken when proper witnesses and authorities are present, and all the purposes of sealing have been fulfilled. "The Lord is thy keeper. He that keepeth thee shall neither slumber nor sleep." Our enjoyment of Him on earth is but a taste of the feast which is ours in heaven. "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you (Eph. 4:31, 32)."

XXXI.

THE NEGATIVE OF CHRISTIANITY

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice."

—EPH. 4:31.

Let all: The Bible is always uncompromising in its scope. The weed is not merely to be topped, it must be uprooted. Every fiber must be destroyed. In removing tonsils it is essential to obtain every tiny particle or a new growth may develop. So it is with evil qualities of character. Paul tells us to put away all evil. This does not mean to let go of wrong habits and pick them up again when convenient; it means to let go once and for all. Faith has been paraphrased, "forsaking all I take Him."

INWARD TRAITS TO BE REMOVED.

Bitterness: Bitterness, wrath and anger are kindred. All of them come from within, merely outwardly expressing themselves as a natural consequence. "Husbands love your wives and be not bitter against them (Col. 3:18, 19)." Bitterness has an almost unnoticed beginning. When allowed to grow, it so firmly establishes itself as to be almost impossible to uproot. Our mouth becomes full of cursing and bitterness (Rom. 3:14). Bitterness must be caught at its beginning. Thoughts are easier to dispose of than words, habits and irritable attitudes toward others. Bitterness contrasted with kindness expresses itself in hard attitudes and words, destroying the influence for good. It spoils the happiness of the one who is bitter. It is sour and souring.

And wrath: Wrath has its origin in want of love, personal pride, misunderstanding or misinterpretation of facts. "Proud and haughty scorner is his name who dealeth in proud wrath (Prov. 21:24)." We are told (Col. 3) to "put off all wrath

and anger" lest we incur the fierceness of God's wrath (Rev. 16:19; 19:15). The danger of wrath is that it soon becomes a habit. An angry person exercises less and less self restraint until finally mastered by wrath instead of being master of it. "You who are contentious and do obey wrath (Rom. 2:8)." Quite frequently wrath takes the place of reasoning and is an admission of wrong doing. "And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath (Luke 4:28)." It is important to observe the particular thing that causes many people to exhibit wrath, and guard against its controlling us. Wrath is contrasted with tender-heartedness. This does not mean soft-heartedness as much as impressionability, or willingness to wait until both sides of the question have been seen or until all angles of the question have been viewed or all facts are in hand.

And anger: Bitterness is a quality of tone. Wrath is obedience to temper or passion. Anger is the disposition which develops by constant exercise to the point where it becomes a rule. It is an intent to injure or discredit an individual or cause. Anger is more than a quarrel, it becomes a feud which settles into a sullen strain of vindictiveness.

There are times when a Christian might be angry. Christ's cleansing of the temple was legitimate. We are told to be angry but to sin not. There is a difference between sudden anger, which because of the frailty of our natures unleashes itself in personal attack, and that righteous indignation which in self defense answers an unjust accusation. The anger to be uprooted is a settled bitterness which is accompanied by hatred breaking out into deliberate attempts to do permanent injury to a person or cause. The anger mentioned in Col. 3:8 not only disturbs the poise of body, mind and spirit which should be the bearing of every Christian, but also renders a soul incapable of doing the will of God and clearly seeing the task which needs to be done. The folly of anger may lead to broken friendship and separation from God. Anger is apt to arouse anger as fire kindles fire (Prov. 14:17). Let us not confuse Eph. 4:26—"be angry and sin not"—with this verse—"let all anger be put away." We have no contradiction.

EXTERNAL CHARACTERISTICS TO BE REMOVED.

And clamour: Clamour is breaking out into loud, uncontrollable noise. An ungoverned recital of one's wrongs or rights with an intention of stirring others and telling the world about it. These wrongs may be real or supposed. Acts (23:9) describes this loud noise of strife and shouting down of one's opponents, as though right were a matter of volume in sound. Quite frequently minorities at political meetings will try to make it appear by their clamour that they are in the majority. Clamor has been described as indecent brawling.

And evil speaking: Many people deliberately injure the character of some one against whom they have no grievance. They not only listen to defaming gossip themselves, but carry the tale to those who are not interested in or related to the affair. Their purpose in running down a character and exciting others to share this attitude of fancied or exaggerated injury and evil against the innocent is beyond reason and contrary to the will of God, the teaching of scripture and the example of Christ. Evil speaking might be divided into two classes; against God, where it becomes blasphemy as in Col. 3:8, or against man, where it vents itself in insult and abuse. The direction of evil speaking is almost universally toward a breaking down of the reputation of the one against whom the attack is intended. It is libelous; its sole purpose is to transplant evil from their own minds to the minds of friends. Titus 3:2 commands us to speak evil of no man. We are instructed to continue doing good even though we may be evil spoken of. According to I Cor. 4:13 we are to pray for those continuing to injure our character and entreat them to be reconciled to God. We are to "lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies and all evil speakings (I Pet. 2:1)." Evil speakings belong in the same class with all sin. In first Timothy (6:4), we have a remedy for evil speaking given us—humility, possession of facts and godliness, together with love of the brethren and love of Christ. These will blot out strifes and evil surmisings.

At times evil speaking is the result of political back-biting. Mud slinging beclouds the issue, injures character and weak-

ens the influence of a political opponent. In religious life it is found in the hatred and emphasis which frequently is placed by religious leaders against those who differ from them in ritual or belief. It develops into intolerance, selfishness and hypocrisy and soon forms a vicious circle. In social life it is found in ordinary gossip.

Be put away: The rebirth which changes our heart and nature does not remove us from facing temptation or its allurements. The putting away here suggested is a putting behind, removing from our life, having no room for unwelcome guests, never giving undesirables admittance at our door. Continue to repulse, keep from friendly alliance with; do not be on speaking terms with evil. "But now ye also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth (Col. 3:8)." This clean-cut separation of ourselves from bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor and evil speaking can only be gained through Christ. No power within ourselves is sufficient for this Herculean task. Many fail because they endeavor by sheer will power to break habits or correct wrongs. Christ alone gives this enabling power.

THE ROOT TO BE REMOVED.

With all malice: A lot of bitterness and ill feeling is caused by this evil speaking about which Paul has been speaking. He would have us remove the cause. You have to clean the bottom of the well before you can have pure water. You must have right soil in order to grow good products. Good seed and improper soil mean loss of the seed. Until all malice has been removed from the heart of the Christian, his religious life is empty. The Jews and the Gentiles did not waste any love on each other. The wide differences in their religious life was apt to break out into violent insinuations and open hostility. When the love of Christ entered their hearts all this was at an end. An old proverb reads, "Keep silent the mouth, as with a bridle."

The Christian must school himself to be like Christ. I Peter

(2:1, 2) urges us to lay aside all malice and desire rather the Word of God. As fire kindles fire, so malice kindles malice and bitterness stirs bitterness. It only takes a drop of sour milk to sour a whole pan of sweet milk. One in whose heart there is malice can create untold suffering and unjust criticism. Christians must have no malice toward others. Malice is mentioned last in this list because it is the root of all previously mentioned sins and it is the more deplorable. Having given us this black picture of the heart-aches of life without Christ, Paul now turns in the next verse to show by contrast, the beauty of the Christ-filled life.

XXXII.

THE POSITIVE OF CHRISTIANITY

"And be kind one to another tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

—EPH. 4:32.

We have viewed the negative of Christianity and considered some of the qualities of character which need to be put away from us as inconsistent with Christianity. This chapter concludes by giving us a positive statement of virtues to be acquired, not merely to be put on as a garment, but to become a vital and inseparable part of our character. In a word, he urges us to forgive others because Christ has forgiven us. Paul wishes every Christian to possess the Spirit of Christ. The Holy Spirit has been given to help us do that which we feel unable to do.

A DIRECT COMMAND.

And be ye: It is easier to preach and teach than to practice. We frequently criticize others for doing what we ourselves do; we expect Christians to demonstrate the reality of their faith by forgiving those who have wronged them, when we are unwilling to assume that same position ourselves. Paul makes his letters of counsel extremely personal. He wants self-examination before critical inspection of others. The mote needs to be removed from our own eyes before we attempt to remove one from the eye of our brother. Christ addressed those who condemned a sinner with these words, "He that is without sin among you cast the first stone." The greatest argument for Christianity is a sincere Christ-like life. This exerts a wider influence than an eloquent sermon. Such lives give precept and example. Our actions are the proof of Christ's living and indwelling presence. Day by day we are to become more and more like Him.

GRACIOUSNESS.

Kind one to another: For the true meaning of kindness we need to go to the languages in which the Bible was written. The word "kindness" has become so diluted as to have lost much of the beauty of its original character. Its primitive meaning was usefulness; gradually this became changed into helpfulness and finally into kindliness. It therefore signifies more than politeness, kind-heartedness or unselfishness. It is action promoted by that love of kindred for each other which is without suspicion and distrust. Perfect love and kindness can exist only as the attitude of a small child and a loving parent. When you begin to critically inspect, carefully weigh and compare words, actions and probable intentions, you soon destroy love. Kindness is impossible under such conditions. Kindness is a flower which grows in the rich loam of courtesy, amiability, gentleness, and goodness and dies among the rocky soil of harshness and unfair judgments.

Kindness, goodness and godliness always keep company. "Put on as the elect of God kindness (Col 3:12)."
"The fruit of the spirit is goodness (Gal 5:22)"; "approving ourselves as the ministers of God by kindness (II Cor. 6:4-6)"; "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off (Rom. 11:22)." Christian duty and Christian love become inseparable. As we love God we must love our enemies. "And do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest (Luke 6:35)." God showed His kindness to us while we were evil and unmindful of His gifts; we must deal kindly, generously, forgivingly and lovingly with those who return evil for good. This difficult ability is not acquired in a moment. Its growth may be a painful one. We will need to go on our knees frequently, but the result more than justifies the means. "Forgive and ye shall be forgiven; give and it shall be given unto you, good measure pressed down and shaken together and running over (Luke 6:37, 38)."

Kindness to those kind to us is easy. Kindness to those who are unkind is difficult, but it may lead us into the friendly graces of those who are hostile. It is always worthwhile to change an enemy into a friend. Paul leads us to hope (Rom. 2:4) that as the goodness of God has finally caused us to repent of our sins, to turn to God, so our repeated and continual goodness towards enemies may eventually turn them into our favor and lead them to acknowledge Christ as Savior. The motive for kindness is found in the commanded Word of God from which there is no escape, and the example of Christ which has justified itself in the power of the Cross throughout all ages and inspired the growth of the church. Kindness expresses itself first, in desiring the good of others. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men (I Tim. 2:1)." Second, in having the capacity of sharing the prosperity and happiness of others although we ourselves may have want and sorrow. This ability to place ourselves in emotional harmony with others frequently leads us to higher levels. Third, in being so sympathetic with the losses and sorrows of others that we can share our tears with them. "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep (Rom. 12:15)." Finally, it is more than sympathy, good wishes or words of comfort; it is tangible, leading to sharing of material gifts with those who need. Our love to God is seen not only in our prayers, but in our sharing with those who have need of this world's goods (I John 3:17, 18).

PITY.

Tenderhearted: Love is the origin of all the virtues we are urged to appropriate. It is impossible to be tender-hearted without love. A beggar, filthy in his garments and repulsive with his disease, may awaken pity in the heart of a passer-by who gives a coin as he passes. Much benefit may be added to the value of his gift, if with the coin, there goes tender-hearted rendering of the gift. Pity and gentleness have their origin in sorrow, necessity and loss. "Be all of one mind having compassion, be pitiful (I Pet. 3:8)."

Tender-heartedness may first express itself towards those

who have endured afflictions, but later it ministers to those who have been cruel towards us, and are stirring up feeling against us. Instead of reciprocating harshness with harshness and fire with fire, the love of God in our hearts impels us to forgive those who have slandered, slighted and wronged us. "Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness (Col. 3:12)." If we imitate the character of Christ, our sympathy will go from the immediate circle of our relatives and friends to wider limits. "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered as sheep having no shepherd (Matt. 9:36)." "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others (Phil. 2:4)." The word "others" involves the whole of the human race; it includes home missions and foreign missions. It cannot stop at America or limit itself to Western civilizations. It is as all-sufficient as that world for which Christ died and the world to whom Paul ministered. We are duty bound to be tender-hearted toward all whose sufferings are physical, mental, moral, social or religious, soothing their sorrows, removing their miseries and bringing light to their doubts.

FORGIVENESS.

Forgiving one another: One version translates "forgiving yourselves." Another translation renders "forgiving each other." Christian society is so closely inter-related that it cannot exist unless there is a mutual willingness to overlook and forgive as Christ has forgiven us. The New Testament is filled with challenges to this duty. When Christ was asked how often forgiveness ought to be granted, He answered seventy times seven, or, until forgiveness has ended in reconciliation. "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? And Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thou-

sand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion and loosed him, and forgave him the debt (Matt. 18:21-27)."

"Forgiving one another, if any man hath a quarrel against any (Col. 3:13)." Our prayers cannot ascend to heaven while our minds treasure any conscious, unwilling, unforgiving spirit. "When ye stand praying, forgive, if you have ought against any, that the father may forgive you (Mark 11:25)." Luke's version of the Lord's Prayer puts our request for forgiveness in its most favorable light because having previously forgiven those indebted to us, we are in a position to ask God to forgive our sins against Him (11:4). Matthew's version puts the case even stronger (6:12). We ask the Lord to forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. According to this prayer, very few sins would be forgiven.

How many so-called Christians say, "I can never forgive" a real or imagined wrong and actually intensify a feeling of ill will! Some are too obstinate, proud, prejudiced or timid to straighten the difficulty. Can we expect God to overlook and pardon this sin while they have taken no steps and made no advances toward wiping out the old score with their fellow-men? Christ offers no exception. It makes no difference how repugnant may be the duty, the Spirit of Christ cannot be in our life until we have cleared away all things which stand in the way of perfect accord with our fellow-men. In Christ and for His sake, there is to be no limit to our forgiveness. "To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also: for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ (II Cor. 2:10)."

Concluding, first the Christian will always take the initial step in forgiveness. He will not wait to be forgiven before he himself forgives. He must forgive even though his act is not recognized by the party forgiven and even though his forgiveness may incite his enemy to greater animosity and hatred. Second, the Christian has a duty to forgive; it cannot be ex-

cused, evaded and assigned to anyone else; our prayer should be Christ's on the Cross, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." This may seem well nigh impossible, but it must and can be done in Christ's name. Though words and action may have been absolutely evil, intentional and malicious, our Christian duty still remains—forgive and pray God to soften their heart and bring them to that saving grace, where they will cry for mercy and forgiveness. Third, God's forgiving of our sin depends upon our willingness to forgive others. Christ died for the world. The whole of human society is to be saved. It cannot be saved, the church cannot grow and Christianity is unable to be a power as long as Christians pray devoutly, give generously, attend faithfully, testify fervently, but treasure hatred toward fellow-man. "Freely ye have received, freely give."

IN CHRIST'S NAME.

Even as God for Christ's sake: The church creates a new society; Christ in the hearts of believers regenerates them, sanctifies them and sets them apart from the world dominated by Satan and his angels. Those without Christ live in darkness; those living in Christ dwell in light. A soldier's uniform distinguishes him and other men from the soldiers of other nationalities. A distinguishing mark of the Christian is kindness, tender-heartedness and forgiveness.

Just what relation does this bear to war? Should nations forgive nations in Christ's name or must wrongs be righted? Wars have been justified as being the judgment of human society against wrong. Are prisons and executions justifiable? Most wars have started from the wrong doing of a single individual. It is easy for an excited individual to inflame a community and that community to precipitate a nation. If that individual and the relatives of that wronged individual had exercised forgiveness, war could have been avoided. Suppose God had organized the hosts of heaven and punished those responsible for the death of His Son, how differently history would have been written. Let us pray for the ability to be longsuffering and forgive as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us.

God is the supreme example and motive for our forgiveness; we dare take nothing less. "This is life eternal that they might know Him the only true God (John 17:3)." The Bible is a record of kindness, mercy and God's forgiveness. Throughout all history God has been blotting out sin and giving new starts. Calvary was a demonstration center for His Divine power and mercy. Those whose sins are ever before them may find at the mercy seat the peace which comes from knowing God has forgiven. Has God forgiven me? Tell another. God will forgive him—so an endless chain lengthens. Human society is to be saved not by good works, but by the grace of God. We are channels of blessing, not the blessing. Be sure to remove all hindrances to the free flow of God's Spirit.

We are free in Christ. Paul does not wish us to lose sight of the fact that cleansing is the outstanding event in redemption of mankind. Christ was God suffering for us. God wanted us to know how much He loved us, so He sent His only Son to die hoping that men might see in the suffering of the Son a picture of the suffering of the Father. "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation (II Cor. 5:19)." First be reconciled to God and then to our brothers. Christ forgave because God had sent Him to forgive and His nature was forgiving. We should do likewise, mindful of our condition when Jesus found us. Our forgiveness should be as free, as generous, as full, as comprehensive and as great as the forgiveness which we hope to receive and have received from God through Christ as our Mediator. As His forgiveness places our sins behind us, so our forgiveness should put the act forever out of our memory, life and the possibility of future recalling. Let our open wound heal by keeping it from irritations.

HAVING RECEIVED FORGIVENESS.

Hath forgiven you: Notice the past tense of the verb. Our forgiveness of others may be a daily opportunity; throughout all of our life we may need to exercise this virtue. The for-

givenness of God is something complete; his work is finished. The blood of Christ was shed on the Cross once and for all; the sacrifice was final; through our acceptance of this sacrifice on the Cross, we are accepted. Every believer throughout the ages of the world will be accepted. "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through Christ (Rom. 5:1)." Let us therefore forgive and be followers of God as dear children regardless of personal cost. Summarizing: God has forgiven the Christian; God has acted in Christ; Christ's forgiveness is a rule for our forgiveness. Let us follow on. Paul now turns to a more complete description of Christian virtues.

I.

OUR STANDARD OF CONDUCT

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children."

—EPH. 5:1.

GOD-LIKENESS.

Be ye therefore: The first two verses of this chapter are intimately related to the closing verses of the preceding chapter where we are cautioned to honor the Holy Spirit by being kind and forgiving one to another as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us. The thought is repeated lest we forget that God desires every true follower to be kind and forgiving. We are to practice what we preach, to bestir ourselves and follow Christ daily. God works through us as examples; Christ is no longer visible, so the moral obligation rests upon us to exhibit Him to others in our forgiveness and kindness. Imitation of Him demands changes in our attitudes, regardless of what others may do; we are to live life upon its highest possible level forgetful of others' failures and inconsistencies. Our eyes are to center upon Christ rather than upon those who journey with us; we are to be as true as God, as pure as God and as forgiving as God. This is impossible if we let the world overcome us, neglect the grace with which we may be strengthened or fail to do His will. Judas Iscariot failed and in remorse hanged himself; Peter failed also, but chose a wiser course and became a pillar of the church. Let us advance from our position by giving our hearts to the Lord. In view of what He has done, of what He expects us to do, and what others are looking to see if we are doing, let us be meticulous followers of God.

IMITATING GOD.

Followers of God: Paul uses "following God" five times. The Greek would translate, "imitating God who is the Ideal

for all loving and forgiving children." We are to reproduce Him in reverence, humility, love and all attributes. This is not only a hope, but also a glorious possibility.

Though we will never reach the height of our capacities or desires, we are to be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect. Our holiness will never approximate the holiness of God, our power never equal His powers of creation, our wisdom never be omnipotent, our love never rise to the heights which sent Christ to die on the Cross for us, yet the Scripture commands us to be followers of God demonstrating His desirableness and ability to help, so those who are living without Him may seek and find.

"Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me (I Cor. 4:16)." "And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost (I Thess. 1:6)."

"For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your countrymen, even as they have of the Jews (I Thess. 2:14)."

"For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you (II Thess. 3:7)." "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises (Heb. 6:12)." "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? (Heb. 12:7)." "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good (I Pet. 3:13)?"

"Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God (III John 11)."

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them which love you what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what

do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect (Matt. 5:44-48).” “Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful (Luke 6:36).”

“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation (I Pet. 1:15).” “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps (I Pet. 2:21).”

As Christ exhibits beauty, majesty, love and holiness in act, word and thought, so we, beholding Him, are to painstakingly and watchfully copy these characteristics in our lives. As God makes the rain to fall and the sun to rise on good and evil, so we are to exercise compassion and forgiveness toward all, loving our enemies and doing good to those who spitefully use us. As we follow Him, this ability will gradually be more markedly ours. First we must empty ourselves to be filled by Him. We will lack much, but what we do in the Master’s name will be divine in origin and quality. The drop of water which hangs from the tip of a pine needle is identical in all its chemical properties to the water of a great mountain lake. Our love may lack the magnitude of God’s love, yet because of the Christ we serve, our love will show God’s love to the world; our neighbors will recognize our service as no self-seeking advantage or worldly reward, but an act done solely and purely for love of God in Christ’s name.

ADOPTED INTO GOD’S FAMILY.

As dear children: One of the happiest of all the names given to disciples was that of children. God is the Father; believers are dear children adopted at the time of regeneration into the family of God. As any earthly child presents in hereditary color of eyes, hair and parental resemblances indications of their parentage, so children of God should show the world familiar divine family characteristics. As dear children we are to love one another; we are to do righteousness and love our brother and in turn be loved of God (I John 3:10). At the moment of our conversion we are born into the kingdom;

like babes we need to be fed on the milk of the Word; like children we are absolutely dependent upon the mercies of a loving parent to sustain us; like children we have a trust which is free from doubt, misgiving and self will; like children "We love Him because He first loved us (I John 4:10)"; like children we are ignorant of the things of the world and gradually as the years go by, add to our knowledge and experience. Our wisdom or our years make no difference, "we must become converted and be as little children" if we would enter the kingdom of God. A great many are willing to take this position of childlike humility and standing. Christianity is a great leveler. On one occasion the President of the United States and one of his servants stood side by side before the altar where they both united with the church and made public confession of their faith. To know God here and now and possess Him forever, we must trust and follow Him as little children and put our feet into the foot steps of Jesus. We must be willing to be like a child who begins tracing outlines. A new convert places himself absolutely under the direction of God and follows His leading. It is a comfort to know our Lord, like a wise parent, makes allowance for our mistakes and does not forget that we are His spiritual children. A wise parent does not expect a child to be grown up beyond its years; in imposing punishment frequent allowances are made for mistakes and errors. God remembers that we are dust. Recall His patience with Peter and the doubts of Thomas; His mercy while on the Cross to the thieves beside Him. Let us not take advantage of His generosity or despair when we have fallen short of the glory of God; our heavenly Father will take us into His arms, soothe our aching heart, give us new courage and strength and guide us during our faults and struggles. When we are born again and become a child of God we are never anything else. The prodigal son, though a source of great grief to his father, was always his father's son. The father's aching heart was breaking when he saw him from afar off, yet he ran eagerly to greet him and to welcome him with forgiving, loving and outstretched arms. Jesus calls the sinner, "Come unto Me." "He that cometh, I will in no wise cast out."

II.

THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST

"And walk in love as Christ also has loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour."

—EPH. 5:2.

BE CHRISTLIKE.

And walk in love: As a new man in Christ Jesus we are to walk worthy of our position. God's spirit dwells in the heart of every believer. As His dear children, we are to walk in love. Love expresses our relation to God and our attitude to fellow-men. If God's love dwells in our heart in all its power and purity, we will find an answer to that age-old question, how will man be reconciled to his God? and to the difficult command (Matt. 5:48), "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Christian faith is more than sentiment. We have more to do than to lie in the arms of Jesus and profess love for Him. We are to walk in love; live with love showing in all our acts; prove by our forgiveness, mercy, loyalty, service, stewardship and sacrifice that we love Him who first loved us. Eye and lip service is insufficient. Divine grace demonstrates itself in all the activities of our earthly life. The joy and power of our Divine relationship reveals itself every hour of the day testifying to the reality of our affection and the certainty of His indwelling presence. Our ability to bear and forbear in love and to do the works of Him while it is day is an evidence of His love in our hearts.

We are to walk in love as God walks in love toward the sinner. God's love has settled the account of sin for ever. Sin is against God. We are therefore to remove all bitterness and malice from our minds and forgive and forget for Christ's sake. God's and Christ's love challenge us to love under all circumstances and at all times. This is never easy, but when

the ability has been achieved our joy is complete. Victory is ours. Love takes the pain, sting and suffering from injustice, malice and evil. Our mind can rest at ease. Our burden has been cast upon the Lord. It is no longer necessary to fan the flames of wrath and resentment or nourish wounded pride and nurse self-respect. Love never fails. "The love of Christ constraineth us (II Cor. 5:14)." "God commendeth His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8)." We are to imitate God's love by showing a loving attitude in every act of life. "Be ye therefore imitators of me."

This attitude does not imply either blindness to sin or silence when God's law has been broken. Gideon rose to right wrong. It does mean that we act gently at all times. Love compels a parent to be severe under justification and punish in an effort to correct. Loving our neighbor as ourselves will inspire us in the name of God to lead him into the paths of righteousness and away from the path of destruction whose end is certain doom. Taking up our cross and following implies danger and conflict. Preaching the gospel with abandon will bring criticism and misunderstanding. Accepting the gospel's offer for ourselves and following the example of Christ at all costs points to seeking happiness in another's good. Christ was constantly keeping His face turned toward the sinner seeking light. He came to seek and save those who were lost. We are to love others as Christ has loved us. Because Christ has loved us we are to love others. Such pure disinterested love is a most powerful motive for work. St. Augustine was amazed that God could love man so much and man could love God so little.

THE MEASURE OF OUR LOVE.

As Christ has also loved us: The measure, pattern and motive for our love is to be the love of God in Christ Jesus. Love must be holy. No earthly love, however pure, will suffice. It cannot stand the strain imposed upon it. A little of Christ's love is insufficient. Divine love cannot be weakened by dilution. While we were in sin, living apart from

God, in antagonism to God, and in a lost condition, God sent His only begotten Son to die for us. God took pity upon His creatures and provided pardon for those ignoring Him through His Son's loving sacrifice on the Cross. How much are we to love?—as He loved. Nothing less will suffice. Christ's love is measured by His gifts for us, by His sacrifice on Calvary, by His foreknowledge of the bitterness of the cup He must drink, by our unworthiness to receive that love. Our love for Christ is to be measured by the degree in which we are able to enter into His love and express it towards those who live in sin and darkness. Satan is our enemy. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ (Rom. 8:35-39)?" who (Rev. 1:5) "loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood?" The Christian life is the outliving of the indwelling Christ. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me (Gal. 2:20)." Walking in love will lead us to love those who are unlovely in sin. One gave as the most beautiful sight he had ever seen, the millionaire William Borden, kneeling in a Rescue Mission with his arms around a drunken sot he was leading to Christ. When we hesitate to enter into some task, when the flesh is weak or the duty distasteful let us ask, "What would Christ have done?" then serve in His name and for His sake. I am to let my light shine before men. I am to let the indwelling Christ speak through me. Jesus must not be confined behind unwilling feet or closed lips.

THE GREATEST EXAMPLE FOR A SELF-SACRIFICING CHRISTIAN.

And hath given himself for us: This verse tells three things Christ has done for us. He has loved us, He has given Himself for us and He has sacrificed for us. Paul used these points frequently in driving home his message. Christ gave Himself to the agonies of death as a ransom for our redemption and an atoning, satisfactory sacrifice to be made once for all. We cannot follow Him in sacrifice for the sins of the world, but we are to exhibit denial of self and substance, zeal

in preaching the gospel to every creature, recognition of the time which draweth near when He may come again, and readiness for His appearing. We can be devotion itself and love Him more than father, mother, children, house or life. God gave His only begotten Son, Christ gave Himself to die on the Cross; we must give ourselves without reserve (John 3:16). Christ's loyalty to the Father and love for Him led to His yielding in all matters and going about to do the will of the Father in heaven. Our loyalty to Jesus will necessitate complete surrender to His will, constant prayer to be guided by His will; knowledge of what He wishes us to do, and courage to do it with all our hearts. Jesus loved me and gave Himself for me that I might be saved and that He might send me to be a worker in the fields white for the harvest (Gal. 2:20). "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13)." "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren (John 3:16)."

Christ's giving of Himself was His Supreme Gift. He gives us many lesser gifts and having given us these—the rain, the sun, night, rest, companionship, the earth and its fullness—will He neglect to give us the greater without reservation? Our faith sees so faintly and imperfectly. Doubts shadow our faith and exclude the Light of life. Having given us Himself, will He not with that gift also freely give us all things? "O ye of little faith." Let us cast ourselves upon Him and being renewed in Him go out into the world to do His will, confident that the resources of heaven are ours. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" The China Inland Mission, acting and living on faith, sent more missionaries to the foreign field during the period of depression than during the days of prosperity. Many denominations retrenched. Faith is justified when we believe that Christ having given of Himself on the Cross will withhold no good thing from them who walk uprightly. Uprightness of walk has a great deal to do with the giving of ourselves. As long as the love of the world is uppermost in our minds, we are not apt to give very much of ourselves or our pocketbooks for the glory of God.

THE DESIGN OF THE SAVIOR'S WORK.

An offering: An offering was of God's appointment and for Himself. It might be of substance, or, in the case of a priest, it might be a person. A person was called an offering when set apart for the service of God. "And the princes offered for dedicating of the altar in the day that it was anointed, even the princes offered their offerings before the altar (Num. 7:10)." These offerings were to be "for you for a memorial before your God: I am the Lord your God (Num. 10:10)." Christ "needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people; for this he did once, when he offered up himself (Heb. 7:27)." This sacrifice was once, for all times and for all people. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation (Heb. 9:28)." This sacrifice shall purge our conscience. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Heb. 9:14)."

As He offered Himself a sacrifice for us we must offer ourselves repeatedly, completely and continuously, morning after morning, day after day, year after year, until He shall call us to be with Him and reign with Him for ever. We must surrender ourselves to the will of God and obey Him in all things, searching the Word for light and the law of service.

A PARTICULAR OFFERING.

And a sacrifice to God: An offering was a general act of dedication. A sacrifice was a particular gift to be brought to the altar and consumed in devotion and obedience to God's command. A sacrifice was something slain. All offerings were therefore not sacrifices, which were instead of, or a substitute for, the person offering, or a type of the spiritual sacrifice of the offerer, who was willing to die as an act of devotion, submission and surrender. The sacrifices of Leviticus were numerous and of varying frequency. The sacrifice of Christ was once and for all, satisfying God completely, being

voluntary, vicarious and of infinite value. Christ was the Lamb who bore our sins upon His body. His blood is the Object of our faith and the Ground of our confidence. "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (I Pet. 1:18, 19)." "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all (Heb. 10:10)." This sacrifice shall "purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Heb. 9:14)." Christ was "a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people (Heb. 2:17)."

"For by one offering he had perfected forever them that are sanctified (Heb. 10:10, 14)." "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God (Rom. 3:25)." "Being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him, for if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life (Rom. 5:9, 10)."

The Jewish sacrifice was a promise and prophecy of the propitiation of blood by Christ. The New Testament sacrifice is a revelation of the Son of God which was offered as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. After the subsiding of the flood, Noah, at the earliest opportunity, offered an offering for a sacrifice which would be sweet smelling to God. This expressed his humility, gratitude and purpose to serve God faithfully all his days as Jehovah had commanded. We are to present ourselves daily to Him, yielding ourselves, desiring to serve no other, humbling ourselves in consciousness of sin, and trusting completely in God's forgiveness, cleansing and renewing. By so doing we relinquish every hope of saving ourselves, we abandon ourselves to the will of God as one to be sacrificed upon the altar, and we resolve with God's help to take up our cross and follow wherever He may lead us.

ACCEPTABLE SACRIFICE.

For a sweet smelling savour: A sacrifice which meets the requirements of God and is pleasing unto Him in all respects, being accepted by Him, pacifying His Spirit provoked by sin, is sweet smelling to Him and a delight. "An odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God (Phil. 4:18)." As the loving sacrifice of Christ was acceptable to God, so our act of worship, surrender and giving of ourselves is gratifying to God. "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ (II Cor. 2.15)." As the denial of the Philippians was a sweet savour to Paul, so our denials will be sweet to God. When Christ dedicated Himself to His Messianic work, God recognized this purpose by saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." When Noah built an altar to the Lord and sacrificed upon it, "The Lord smelt a sweet savour and the Lord said, I will not curse the ground any more for man's sake." When we offer ourselves to God He is well pleased and recognizes this service by showering us with blessings, answering our prayers and causing our measure of happiness to be overflowing with joy. If our actions please God we are not left in ignorance of that fact. Our sacrifice will not seem a sacrifice when we offer it unto the Lord. After that it will be bread cast upon the waters to return after many days.

Our sacrifice is planted seed which shall bring forth an abundant harvest, both in this world and in the next. The Lord bounteously rewards all who trust in Him. Let us therefore walk hopefully and sincerely in love, following the footsteps of Jesus who loved us when we were yet sinners, who died for us as proof of His love and who not only brought an offering, but a living sacrifice in our behalf. If any have not accepted this sacrifice in their behalf, now is the time to do so. If any have accepted this for themselves, but have not shared this gift with others, begin immediately to do so. Christ would send our money, our prayers and our bodies unto the uttermost parts of the world. Christ's sacrifice is to lead us to sacrifice.

III.

THE CONDUCT OF SAINTS

"But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it be not once named among you as becometh saints."

—EPH. 5:3.

SENSUALITY CONDEMNED.

But fornication and all uncleanness: Storm-signals are being displayed. A threefold list of evil habits are named which may mean the loss of a soul. Believers are to be constantly on the alert lest they revert to former type by permitting the fascinations of the former life of lust to take possession of them. Constant danger surrounds them in their daily environment. Christ alone can save them. Walking in love does not mean to yield to the entreaties of those who practice vice. Christ condemned sin in no uncertain terms. Fornication, uncleanness and covetousness are sins against ourselves. Paul contrasts the burning lust of the flesh with our love for Christ. Who, knowing or experiencing the love of Christ, would want to exchange it for anything Satan could offer? "Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body (I Cor. 6:12-14)." All sins of the flesh must be abandoned as intolerable and separating us from the kingdom of God. Every act, thought and desire which will strengthen temptation must be pruned if we are to bear fruit for the Master's use.

Fornication and uncleanness are grouped together in Gal. 5:19; II Cor. 12:21; I Thess. 4:3, 7. Fornication is specific sin; uncleanness is general sin covering impurity of all kinds. We are to commit neither. Frequently a false modesty causes pastors to skip these words in public Bible reading. They are not pleasant, but every word in the Bible has vital meaning. Cancer is a terrible malady; it is no kindness to cover its existence. "Thou shalt not commit adultery (Ex. 20:14)"

was one of the first laws given Israel. Christ reaffirmed this law. "Thou shalt not commit adultery (Matt. 19:18)." Paul's letter to the Romans does not forget to remind them (Rom. 1:24) "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves." Christ came "to cleanse us from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit (II Cor. 7:1)." The Christian is to abhor uncleanness, filth and impurity in all its forms, imaginations, longings, and acts. Uncleanness is repugnant to God; it defiles the body and corrupts the mind. The unclean are cursed. Sins of the father and mother descend to the children of the third and fourth generation. Man can sink to low depths when he abandons God for fleshly desires which science cannot condone or medical practice approve. Nature rebels. Purity and cleanness belong to the Christian. "Wash me, O Lord, and make me clean"; "Create in me a clean heart." "Now are ye clean through the word which I have spoken unto you (John 15:3)." "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing: and I will receive you (II Cor. 6:17)."

FORSAKE GREEDY DESIRES.

Or covetousness: Worldly success is always greedy; it is never satisfied, begrudging both others and God of a share and the time needed for development of spiritual power and expressions of service. The love of riches is the root of many evils. The ambition to get wealth at all costs, even though fraud and extortion may be needed in the process, is sinful. Ahab coveted the vineyard of Naboth (I Kin. 21:1-13) and committed a dark crime in order to acquire the plot of ground. "Treasure of wickedness profit nothing, but righteousness delivereth from death (Prov. 10:2)." "He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor (Prov. 28:8)." Rather let us be "rich in good works ready to distribute (I Tim. 6:17, 18)."

Covetousness is to be avoided as odious to the Lord. "The covetous, whom the Lord abhoreth (Psa. 10:3)." Covetousness

may turn us from God. "Love not the world neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him (John 2:15)." Trouble and sorrow are apt to follow. "But they that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition (I Tim. 6:9)." Like silt in a river which gradually clogs its mouth with deposits of soil, so covetousness gradually shuts the heart to those generous impulses which God commands. The tithe is banished by eager, grasping, selfish desires which have no place for the rights of others. Let us rely on God's promise of provision, "But rather seek ye the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you (Luke 12:31)." "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink (Matt. 6:25, 26)." "Let your conversation be without covetousness (Heb. 13:5)."

SEPARATE YOURSELF.

Let it not be once named among you: We are neither to practice fornication, uncleanness or covetousness, nor are we to think of them. The Christian is pure in imagination and thought. To speak of these things except to those we are trying to help is vulgar, coarse and apt to blunt our sense of harm. Naming these sins dishonors God and violates His express commandment. The gospel is given that God may "purify a people unto himself (Titus 2:14)" which will be worthy of heaven and the mansions prepared for us. The pagans did not always practice these vices, but they tolerated them. Sin is catching. Speech is like the touch of one diseased; germs may cling to the healthy and cause disease in others. When Venice was in the hands of the Austrians, the Venetians never hesitated to show their distaste of their conquerors. If an Austrian entered a public restaurant when they were dining, the Venetians promptly withdrew. Are we tolerant of sin? The modern home is so broadminded as to leave the door open for much that later leads to the disintegration of the home. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall (I Cor. 10:12)."

Watch your speech not only for the sake of your own household, but for the sake of your neighbor. Your words may be a match to light a flame in a slumbering passion of your neighbor. There are words we must not even name or know the full meaning of lest we contaminate ourselves. Touch a grimy tool and the hands are blackened. As we choose our companions, let us choose our words. There are enough beautiful words which praise God, tell our testimony of faith in Him and desire to follow Him to the end, to occupy all our time and thought. Pull evil words, like weeds, from the garden of your mind. As good children of God, return to a childlike purity of mind.

SET APART.

As becometh saints: The dignity of our position, our calling to holiness, our relationship to God, our command to be pure in heart and be blessed by the sight of God, our heavenly calling and our urge to be consistent at all times, calls us to walk as becometh saints and children of light. We are set apart at baptism for Christ's use. Sins have been washed away by the precious blood of the slain Lamb of God; the Holy Spirit has a purifying influence upon us. A new nature is given us by internal regeneration. We are to live as becometh saints and keep company with the "saints at Jerusalem (Acts 9:13)." Negatively we are to avoid all that is contrary to the spirit and life of Christ—idleness (Ezek. 16:49); evil company (Prov. 7:25), and all sin (Prov. 1:25). We are to watch our thoughts (Mal. 2:16). Positively we are to continue in prayer (Matt. 26:41); "to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation." We are to delight in God's word (Prov. 2:10, 16); to deny ourselves and take up our cross daily and follow (Luke 9:23). Every thought, word and deed is to be in subjection to Christ, the Author and Finisher of our faith. We are called to be saints. How white are we? If our lives are black or gray, there is power in the blood of Jesus to cleanse us from all sin. Walk as becometh, as would grace, as would compliment and delight a saint; and find happiness in virtue.

IV.

WHAT BEFITS A CHRISTIAN

“Neither filthiness nor foolish talking nor jesting which are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks.”—EPH. 5:4.

SHAMEFUL CONDUCT.

Neither filthiness: Here is a threefold list of particular acts whose practice tends to produce the evil habits which have just been condemned. No possible good can come from filthiness, foolish talking or profane jesting. Foul and impure speech has no place in the mind, or on the lips of a Christian. They besmire and leave an ugly mark and stain difficult to remove. “What can take away my sin? Nothing, but the blood of Jesus.”

By filthiness is meant obscenity in act, word, jesture or imagination; base, dishonorable corruption of self or others; ugly, revolting conduct which dishonors the body intended to be a temple of the Holy Ghost. Filthiness includes all that is morally hateful, revolting, and disgusting to God who is pure and altogether good; it covers all that lessens the modesty of the Christian; everything which detracts from that sober and grave consideration of ideals and practices which honor God. “The fear of the Lord is clean (Psa. 19:9).” “For whoremongers and adulterers, God will judge (Heb. 13:4).” In I Pet. 4:1, we are reminded that believers in Christ die to the flesh and lusts of the flesh.

SINS OF THE TONGUE.

Nor foolish talking: Shameful conversation, silly speech and rude words belong to fools in sin. The task committed to followers of Jesus cannot be completed when the mind is occupied with light, bantering, idle speaking and corruption. We cannot afford to indulge in aimless, senseless, frivolous,

vainglorious ostentation of self, when so much needs to be done. Souls are perishing for the truth. Realizing the serious purpose of life, the grave issues which lie about us and ahead and the great facts of sin, God, eternity, and glory to be revealed, all talk should be seasoned with grace. Life to a Christian possesses dignity and depth. To make it shallow by foolish talking is more than unwise, it is destructive. "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment (Matt. 12:36)." Our tongues belong to God from whom we received them. "Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men which are made after the similitude of God (Jas. 3:9)." We talk foolishly when we speak of foolish things, when we speak of serious or sacred things in a flippancy way, when we ramble in useless words, when we boast instead of having that humility which Christ so clearly and constantly demonstrated, when we waste time capable of more profitable employment, when time flies past us empty of that with which Christ would have filled it, and which we by the light of His word and the guidance of His Holy Spirit may fill it.

PROFANE LAUGHTER.

Nor jesting: Humor has its place in speech. All of us need the invigoration and exercise of a good laugh. Nerves get tight and are apt to snap, so God gave us laughter. The jesting here condemned is that profane, graceless wit, that polished, refined, bitter insolence which injures, pains and makes light of that which is sacred and holy. There is a satire which makes light of the grandness of human life and faith in God; which has no reverence or awe for the great mysteries of life, death or God. The jesting to be condemned includes impure, obscene, lewd allusions which demoralize; sharp cutting, injuring wit intended to produce a laugh at the expense of injured feelings of the innocent; ill-natured wit and subtle humor which offends tender feelings; loose talking about religion; a laugh intended or resulting in destruction of faith in God or the practice of morality; injurious, abusive, dis-

graceful, damaging, vexing, prejudicing, sly and smart intimations. There is a place in the Bible for innocent pleasure and amusement. Jestings, at times, has been wisely used to expose evil and give strength to an argument or point which otherwise might have been lost or soon forgotten. Conversation is enriched, lightened and made profitable by healthy mirth. A good and hearty laugh does good like medicine.

The Christian may never jest about God, death, the devil, the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, the holy things of man, sin or the piety of others. We must never mock goodness. Life is real; life is earnest. A jest can be of a nature whereby all may enter into a hearty laugh with no after pricking of conscience, feeling of embarrassment, blush of shame or need of asking pardon of man or God.

JUDGMENT SAINTS.

Which are not convenient: The three vices of filthiness, foolish talking and profane jesting are included here as being unbecoming, unsuitable, unfitting and opposite to a believer in Christ who is about his Father's business. These never should be convenient in themselves. Those who practice them will be judged later for every idle word spoken for the hearers' momentary amusement. Let us always speak "as it is fit in the Lord (Col. 3:18)." "The wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience." Filthiness, foolish talking and jesting are not as harmless as may be apparent upon first thought. Disgrace and dishonor may be their fruit. The soul is man's most precious possession. The body returns to dust, but the soul is a part of eternity. Everything should contribute to its life, happiness and aims. Four things are said to weaken our guard against sin—fear, shame, grief and indignation. Fear removes a sense of guilt; shame adds to the stain of sin; grief dishonors Christ and indignation proves an unsuitable garment for a son of God walking in the light. To check upon ourselves, ask, Is this Christ-like? Did Jesus do this? Is this following his pattern?

THE RIGHT USE OF THE TONGUE.

But rather giving of thanks: How much there is for which we can praise God; how numberless are His mercies. Jesus

gave His life on Calvary's Cross for me. As becoming saints, let us look for those things for which we can give thanks. We often fail to find many blessings because we are too busy counting what we do not have to note how much we possess which others lack. To really see how good God has been, we need to look backward as well as about us. Look out and up instead of within and near by when there seems to be little cause for thanks. "Give thanks always" Thanksgiving puts speech to a good use and fulfills our duty to give thanks to God. "Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving (Col. 2:7)." "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body: and be ye thankful (Col. 3:15)." "Continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving (Col. 4:2)." Replace evil thoughts with good. Fill the mind with thoughts of God, His love, goodness and purity. Only believers have enduring cheerfulness and happiness of the heart which the world cannot take away. Life is a matter of choices. Why take a bad apple when a sweet, beautiful and perfect one is offered? Why take tinsel when gold is possible? Why destroy when you can save? Why take imitations when the genuine is yours for the asking? Why take the laugh of the moment, when eternal joy may be possessed through Christ Jesus?

V.

WHO INHERITS THE KINGDOM

"For this ye know, that no whoremonger nor unclean person, nor covetous man who is an idolator hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." —EPH. 5:5.

LIVE UP TO YOUR LIGHT.

For this ye know: Paul had forsaken all for Christ. His back was turned squarely upon the former life. New tasks were so engrossing, so much depended upon them as to leave no time nor inclination to revert to the old life. How empty the past seemed in the light of present knowledge of Jesus the Savior of the world. "For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (I Cor. 6:20)." We always need to keep facts of our redemption to the front; to recall from what we have been saved and for what we have been saved. Vice and virtue are in opposite hostile camps. At no time can these two opposing powers be allies. Paul appeals to past knowledge and conscience to stir up their faith and cause them to live up to God's provision for them in talents and opportunity before a penalty be imposed for continuance in the old life. How many of us live up to the light which has been given us? Enough knowledge is available to save most of the world. We carry empty lamps and wish to be admitted to the marriage-feast to which invitations have been received but for which we have not made the necessary provision.

SIN IN OUR PERSON.

That no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man: Sin has been described as filth, foolish talking and jesting. Now the person is described who habitually persists in practice of these vices. Children of light receive from the Light

of the world and become luminous. Children of darkness associate with the powers of darkness until they are unable to give any light. Take a beautiful piece of shining polished steel capable of making reflections like a mirror; bury it; leave it in a dark, cold cellar; forget it and when it is brought into the light the smooth surface is corroded with rust. Contact with the soil has made it like the soil which it touched. So is man. Live in sin; live away from the companionship with the Son of God, and soon the ability to shine is lost. The heathen made a lot of allowance. If a man of evil reputation died in battle or became a hero, much was forgotten. God always called sin, sin. The President of the United States is no more immune to the requirements of God's law than the humblest citizen. The millionaire and the pauper all stand side by side in their position as suppliants before the Cross. The Christian church does not have various levels for different classes of worshipers as does the Mohammedan mosque. "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth (Col 3:8)." The impure, indecent fornicator cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Forgetting to mention these does not help closing your eyes to these words, yet practicing or tolerating these evils can have but one result—punishment and penalty.

The unclean substitute the unchaste and sensual for God. The Lord made everything in the world, but He did not intend man to live on a plane with animals and be guided by passion. It is impossible to have gold and bricks occupy the same place at the same time. One or the other must remain. Every brick means that much less gold. The mind is so constituted that every evil thought is like a piece of wild honeysuckle. Once let a root become firmly established and soon the vine spreads with amazing rapidity to choke every tree and living thing to which its tendrils cling. An unclean picture, statue, thought, book or companion roots quickly and, without any apparent intention, soon has all thought of purity choked. A weed does not need cultivation; the finer the plant the greater the care usually necessary before maturity develops. Keep clean lips, clean imaginations, clean yearnings

and there will be more room for God. Keep the mind as clean as the hands, the tongue as clean as the teeth; the garment of righteousness as fresh as the clothes with which we appear at social engagements. God's best apparel is ours. None need ever refuse to stand in God's presence because of improper attire.

Supreme love of riches, perhaps the most common of sins, is heinous in the sight of God. Avarice, mammon-worship and greed are here grouped with major sins. We cannot call ourselves righteous because we lack some of these sins, yet be lured by gold. Col. 3:5 links the covetous man with idolators. The idolator usually worships the creature instead of God; the covetous man worships what man has made. Love of money is the root of all evil. It turns us away from worship of God. "Covet earnestly the best gifts (I Cor. 12:31)." These are the spiritual treasures in heaven where moth and rust cannot enter. Misappropriation of the blessings of providence is covetousness. I Cor. 10:24 must be seriously interpreted, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth." "Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbor's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbor's house, his field, his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or anything that is thy neighbor's (Deut. 5:21)." Covetousness is forbidden. Indulgence cannot be excused. "Woe to them that . . . covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses and take them away; so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage (Micah 2:1, 2)." Where does the foreclosing of a mortgage come in the light of this? Can man's permission by law ever receive the condemnation of God? Does the privilege of the law ever include the renderings to Caesar? Covetousness is punished. "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth (Isa. 5:8)." "For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart (Isa. 57:17)."

Covetousness misappropriates the blessings of providence, makes man satisfied with dollars rather than God; stunts the spiritual nature and leads the possessor into worry, anxiety,

suffering, loss and an early grave. Money is good, having capacity for much good. The kingdom of God cannot prosper without it; the great work of the church does not advance without it. Wealth is always blessed when it first serves God.

SERVE GOD ONLY.

Who is an idolator: We cannot serve God and mammon. We must not place the creature or object in place of God and the Creator, put material above spiritual or wealth above goodness. One of the first commandments was "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me." The Christian is given wealth to use for the good of others and of God. We are not to keep company with idolators, for then "must ye needs go out of this world (I Cor. 5:10)." "Because thou hast rejected the word of God, he hath also rejected thee from being king (I Sam. 15:23)." We are to turn away from those who are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof (II Tim. 3:4, 5)." "Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things (Phil. 3:19)." "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him (I John 2:15)." All our energy is to be devoted to loving God and worshiping Him who is a jealous God. Thirteen various phases of our worship are given: esteem, mindfulness, intention, resolution, love, trust, fear, hope, desire, delight, zeal and gratitude. Watch lest riches take our priceless possession from us; better be sure of the kingdom of God. "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

A TOTAL LOSS.

Hath any inheritance: We are either in heaven or out of heaven. We receive our inheritance or are disinherited. Our own choice condemns or saves us. Children of light are not mingled with children of darkness. This is no motley assembly. By greed, we may lose all and be like the man who fled from a sinking ship with his pockets filled with gold and

was sent to the bottom by the weight of his wealth. A child keeps adding to an armful, until everything goes tumbling to the ground. Israel inherited Canaan when she followed God's rule of conduct, not before. Heaven is the possession of those who lie in the mind of Jesus. "Ye must be born again" by the Spirit. Acceptance of Jesus' way of salvation makes us sons of God and joint-heirs of Jesus Christ. "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ (Gal. 4:7)." "And if children then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together (Rom. 8:17)." "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God (I Cor. 6:9, 10)." The sinner excludes himself from the kingdom of heaven and fails to measure up to God's requirement of worship.

THE GOAL.

In the kingdom of Christ and of God: Christ, the Risen One, sits on the right hand of God the Father. The Divine Messiah shed His precious life blood for the kingdom He came to establish. Some distinguish between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Christ being on earth, limited in scope, political in sphere, Jewish and exclusive in its character, national in aspect, a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and dispensational in character. Christ, as King, sits on a throne surrounded with nothing that defileth and admits through a gate of love and redemption those who shall share His kingdom. All the redeemed whose robes are washed by the blood of the Lamb and who are sanctified by His Spirit are to share the wealth of this kingdom throughout all eternity. On the other hand, they speak of God's kingdom as a kingdom in heaven with God ruling over the earth in unlimited scope, power and limits of time. This kingdom is moral and spiritual in scope and sphere; it is the subject of

the New Testament record and is eternal in duration. Flesh and blood cannot enter into it, for only that which is holy exists here.

While some believe Paul here recognizes Christ as equal with God and essentially God though not to the exclusion of the Father—it is probable Paul sees Him as an equal member of the holy Trinity. "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels (I Tim. 5:21)." "I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things and before Christ Jesus (I Tim. 6:13)." "That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of God and Lord Jesus Christ (II Thess. 1:12)." "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13)."

Membership and inclusion is the goal never to be lost sight of in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Once and for all the kingdoms are not contrasted here, but are linked as an identical, inseparable and undivided partnership. This is our heritage. Let us enter in and take possession. "Ask and ye shall receive."

VI.

LIGHT-HEARTED WICKEDNESS

"Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."
—EPH. 5:6.

SELF-FLATTERY.

Let no man deceive you: God's word is law. It may not be understood, man may rebel against it, he may try to compromise with sin, excuse his breaking of the law, justify his actions, condone his conduct, but in all these ways he is only deceiving himself. Man may say morality is puritanical, a relic of bygone days and outgrown. Vice may be dismissed with an apology, and failure may be tolerated. Man may feel no serious harm has been done and he is apparently none the worse for his laxity; nevertheless, trifling with sin which God has definitely forbidden is open disobedience and infraction of God's law. God may withhold punishment until some may say God will not punish, but in the fullness of time God does punish sin.

Saints who have seen the light are not to be deceived by such language. They have entered into fellowship with God and know His words. Their experience of His mercy proves clearly that God's ways are not man's ways. More is expected of believers than to fall an easy prey to the wiles of the devil and his agents. The warning still needs to be given repeatedly. So many become weary in well doing. Laxity in worship, withdrawing from the presence of Christ, irregularity in prayer, indifference to knowing His will and quick dismissal of what is not clear on the surface, place them in a frame of mind whereby they can be easily deceived and duped.

Parents should warn children of the perils of life apart from God. Dissipation does not pay. Wild oats leave their mark. The censure of the just judge is inevitable. Yielding

to the entanglements of the world and the suggestions of boon companions may ruin their lives and make it impossible to ever rise to the heights. A bird with a broken wing may fly again, but never as swiftly nor to such heights as formerly. Children must learn of the tyranny of habits, the effects of intemperance and indulgence, and the deceitfulness of sin which leads from sin to sin until the follower of sin is enslaved by sin. There is no reformation without Christ. Man must be born again to enter into the kingdom of heaven. There is no other door. "By me must every man enter."

The Scripture is clear upon this point. There are those who "by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple (Rom. 16:18)." "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God (I Cor. 3:19)." "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners (I Cor. 15:33)." "But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted, from the simplicity which is in Christ (II Cor. 11:3)." "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition (II Thess. 2:3)." "If any man among you seemeth to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain (Jas. 1:26)." "Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap (Gal. 6:7)." "Little children let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous (I John 3:7)."

EMPTY SPEECH.

With vain words: Vain words are without trust and empty of value. The shell is without a kernel. Reasoning is false. How soft the world makes life—"There is no hell or retribution; God, being love, cannot punish; the soul does not exist so there cannot be a future life; God's wrath is but a figure of speech; the Bible is not scientific; much of the Bible is for a past generation; miracles were creations of the imaginations; what proof is there that a hell exists; who has come back to tell about it"—So they rave in vain and empty words,

placing the reasoning of God against their meager ability, and assigning the Ten Commandments to the beginnings of human history. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter (Isa. 5:20)." "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ (Col. 2:8)." Any plan of man which is not in harmony with God's plan will prove to be vain and more than useless. Man cannot blame original sin for his failings when God has given a way of escape.

How empty are their words! "God will not call them to account, or if they are judged, God will be merciful despite their sin." How lightly II Tim. 2:19 is dismissed: "The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" is no excuse for sin. David sinned and was punished for his sin, even though he was king of Israel. The fruitful repentance of the thief on the cross has led many to delay salvation and lose their souls. "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 3:13)." Some hope by doing good in other directions to make amends. Righteousness is not of the law. Goodness lies in obedience to the law of God.

GOD'S REASON.

For because of these things: Because of vice, uncleanness, covetousness, the deceit of empty words, teachings of false teachers, disobedience, life contrary to the word of God, being unequally yoked together, tolerated sins, indulgences, discounted frailties and numerous irregularities, the wrath of God cometh sure. God's voice rolls like thunder down the pages of history. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." A single indulgence may ruin a whole life. Pitch on the hands clings for days before it finally wears away. One grain of iodine will give color to one thousand times its weight of water. One sin may spell disaster. One weak link

may cause a ship released from its anchor, to dash upon the rocks.

"All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits. Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established (Prov. 16:2, 3)." Self-love is distasteful to God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and thy neighbor as thyself." God's word tells how to escape the wrath of God. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" Attend the word of the Lord and do not make light of it nor go each their own way.

GOD'S JUSTICE.

Cometh the wrath of God: The present tense is used. The wrath of God is surely coming. There is no way of stopping it. It is as sure as if it had already come. The wrath of God is impartial. God has mercy for the penitent, but also judgment for those who have played with opportunities, made excuses for wrong doings, and sinned wilfully. "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath, against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God (Rom. 2:5)." The loss, suffering and pain we incur on this earth is as nothing compared with what will be in store when the wrath of God descends like a thief in the night. Because we do not like to think of this solemn fact, many take life easily and lose their eyes to the gathering storm. Storm signals are for the safeguarding of life and property. If they are ignored, blame no one. God flies storm signals in the Bible. Let us be wise and heed them. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him (John 3:36)." "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18)." "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteousness of God (Rom. 2:5)." There

is no respecter of persons with God. "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness which is idolatry, for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience (Col. 3:5, 6)." We are to wait for His Son "even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come (I Thess. 1:10)." The wrath of God is terrible (Rev. 19:15), and those who see it approaching will want to hide from it. "For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand (Rev. 6:17)?"

The wrath of man has been terrible, but the wrath of God knows no limit. God has power over body and soul which reaches into all eternity. The wrath of God is seen in the disappearance of polluted races. Sin has been punished. The sins of the father descend unto the third and fourth generation. The unconverted and converted are judged. We have God's favor or His anger. In this lies the urgency of missionary enterprise and the need for a pure gospel. Believers are to flee from the wrath to come and warn others of its certainty and terrors. The wrath of God is a consuming fire bringing destruction. "Fear ye him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell." Believe in God's pity, righteousness and justice. ACCEPT the Lord Jesus Christ and the sacrifice upon the Cross and live. "He that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

EXPOSED TO GOD'S WRATH.

Upon the children of disobedience: Those who wilfully defy God's laws and reject His merciful provision for them, those empty of His spirit when all they have to do is to ask and receive, those who are doctrinally incorrect when the truth is plain and unmistakable, shall be visited with God's displeasure. "I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith (Deut. 32:20)." As it was in the days of Noah and as it was in the days of Lot, so shall it be in our days. "Nevertheless the foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And

let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity (II Tim. 2:19)." The will of God is a great resistless force which moves on as does the march of the planets. The force of gravity is not more certain than the will of God, and the expression of His punishment upon the contentious who do not follow truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath (Rom. 2:8).

Children of disobedience are stubborn and obstinate; they wilfully turn from God's way to their own way rebelling against the light which they have. "They know not the ways thereof nor abide in the paths thereof (Job 24:13)." "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God (I Pet. 4:17)" Children of disobedience include those who sin indirectly as well as directly. They may sin through counsel of others (II Sam. 13:5). "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not (Prov. 1:10)." A terrible picture of the atmosphere in which children of disobedience live is painted in Rom. 1:2-32. It is a world of darkness, evil, trouble, unhappiness, pain, suffering and doom, because "knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." To avoid the penalty for sin, come to Jesus and separate yourself from those who make light of God's Word and warning. "Walk in the light as He is in the light," and all will be well.

VII.

A NOTE OF WARNING

"Be not ye therefore partakers with them."—EPH. 5:7.

SELF-DETERMINATION.

Be not ye therefore: The children of disobedience are to be visited with the wrath of God. God has promised it and God does not change. Children of light have a visitation of God of a different character. He goes with them to guide them to all truth. They hold themselves apart from sin because sin is contrary to the will of God. A Christian assumes very definite obligations when he chooses to follow Jesus. His public confession involves concrete professions and mode of living. Goodness, righteousness and truth must characterize us. We are God's men. Therefore it should not be difficult for the world to tell that we have been with Jesus and are disciples of Him. Many are asking church members what the damsel asked of Peter that bitter night of his temptation. "Did I not see? Were you not? And now?"

It is our own fault if we are like those in darkness. God has given each one the power of choice. No one has to do what sinners do. Our escape lies in staying close to Jesus. No excuse can justify our action. Adam blamed Eve, Eve blamed the serpent. Ever since mankind has been trying to pin blame for misconduct to another's shoulders. As Adam and Eve were punished by banishment from the garden, so God will close heaven's doors against the entrance of anything which defileth or maketh a lie. Regardless of what others may be doing, even though it may be fashionable, in view of a neighbor's apparent prosperity in evil, despite the seeming temporary futility of following Jesus and receiving immediate visible blessings above those granted those who live apart from God—persist, follow through and endure to the end. The day of judgment separates the wheat from the

tares. To pull up the tares before the harvest would also jeopardize the wheat whose roots would be loosened; the wheat might wither and die. Imitate God, the saints and let Christ be your pattern. Let not the vain, empty promises of the world, the flesh and the devil allure you to your doom. The only way to escape the punishment of the wicked and the wrath of God is to accept Jesus as your personal Savior and Redeemer. The paths lie before you. Choose you this day whom ye will serve. Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin. "Ask the Saviour to help you. . . . He will carry you through." We must be out and out for the Lord. If we temporize and dally with evil, evil communications will corrupt good manners and evil habits will be firmly established

KEEP SEPARATE.

Partakers with them: We are not to be sharers in disobedience. Our association with sinners is for the purpose of leading them to a saving knowledge of Christ. Jesus ate with publicans and sinners, but He did not sin because of this contact nor did He share the penalty for their sin. The gospel is to be preached. How else are sinners to hear and desire confession of their sins? The vile, the wicked, the worldly and the sons of disobedience—all have souls precious in the sight of God. The sacrifice on the Cross was for them; the blood of the living sacrifice can cleanse their sins. How can they hear unless one is sent to them? Paul is not urging aloofness from them but cessation of sinning with them. Many a new convert has found old associations too strong in temptation; drink, gambling and vice have been resumed and the church has been forsaken.

Because of their knowledge of the method of preventing contagion, doctors and nurses seldom contract the diseases among which they visit. The layman may easily spread and contract contagious diseases. The saved, re-born Christian can work in the vilest surroundings and rise like a snow-white lily in the blackest ooze of the swamp. But there is every possibility of backsliding and reverting to sin for one with only an uncertain, undeveloped Christian character. "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet

not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolators (I Cor. 5:9-10).” “Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord has Christ with Belial (II Cor. 6:14)?”

By listening to the voices of the world we may be drawn into the world. It is dangerous to swim in rapids. They wear down resistance and draw the helpless, exhausted swimmer to his doom. The sinner seldom realizes the extent of his helplessness until it is too late. The drinker can always quit; the dope-fiend has happy dreams and relief from pain and suffering until the terrible awakening—habits have enslaved and are master. Be not partakers lest the aims of the world, the conduct of the Christless, the social intercourse with the Godless produce a gradual blindness and incapacity to see and desire the things of God. When we yield to the point of consenting to their life, we soon join with them and eventually are with them in their punishment.

There are many ways in which we may be partakers with sinners and break the law of God. We may actually practice the sins of the sinners. We may concur and share guilt. The swimmer standing idly by a drowning person without attempting to rescue is legally implicated in the drowning. David was guilty of Uriah's death even though his hand did not actually kill Uriah; “Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten and die (II Sam. 11:15).” Saul became a partaker in the death of Stephen when he held the garments of those who stoned him. “And Saul was consenting to his death (Acts 8:1).” We may be partakers in thought if not in deed. “He that looketh after a woman to lust after her, is guilty.” We are partakers when we rejoice in the downfall of good or are not alarmed by the triumph of evil. All of his life Paul regretted consenting to the death of those whom he persecuted with the consent of the law. “And when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them (Acts 26:10).” How many by ballots cast their votes today for those who by creation of bad laws or non-enforcement of good laws are workers with Satan rather than God? We may be partakers of evil

by commanding evil to be done, by counseling silence, by threatening loss of position, by deriding reformers, by luring others to lower their standards under the assumption that he who thinks no evil cannot sin, by open boasting of sinning and yet not being any the worse for it; by hiring lawyers, brokers and agents to do in their name what we would be ashamed to do in our own name, by contribution to causes without investigation. We sin by justifying, defending, extenuating, commending, conceiving or rejoicing in evil. We give occasion to sin by leading others to sin, by having no remorse for sin, by not confessing our sin or excusing our sin, by provoking others to sin and by authorizing sin. There is no excuse for sin. God never tells us to associate with the sinner in his sin or accompany him in sin to save him. Many a poor wife who married her husband to reform him has found out the futility of such a course to her sorrow. "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Let us not hinder the gospel by failure to correct, punish, renounce or complain against sin. Have sorrow for and pray against sin on every occasion. Love the sinner, but hate the sin. Have no fellowship with evil. Be ye not therefore partakers with them.

VIII.

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light." —EPH. 5:8.

REASON FOR SEPARATION.

For ye were sometimes darkness: Paul was a traveling evangelist who had seen a great deal of life. His visits to the great cities of his day brought him in contact with all conditions of society. His opinions were based upon a rich and varied experience in human nature. Soldiers had been chained to him and had traveled many long days with him. Prisons with their motley group of criminals and those unjustly accused had held him upon more than one occasion. Kings had conversed with him; religious leaders argued with him. The great philosophers of the Greek world heard him on Mar's Hill. He worked side by side with artisans. The common people heard him gladly. Paul knew both sides of human nature. Having been without Christ he was now with Him to the death. Paul believed all were in darkness and shadow who did not follow Jesus. They possessed no light on the great problems of light. Sin blinded their eyes. Only Christ could forgive the sin surrounding them with intense darkness. He gently reminds converts of their former state lest their joy in a new-found hope cause them to forget those who were without the pale of the church and those for whom Jesus died.

All were in darkness prior to conversion and acceptance of the gospel. More than this they were impregnated with intense and impenetrable darkness, more dense than any fog. They possessed no ray of light. We are born with a sinful nature. Christ alone can take this from us at our spiritual rebirth. "Ye must be born again." Sin places us in misery, keeps us in ignorance, makes us wretched, surrounds us with pollution, leaves us in ignorance of God, His will for us and

His plan of salvation; sin dominates our foolish, sensual, devilish, stubborn dispositions and robs us of the glories of heaven. Sin is untruthful, deceitful, false, tricky, a wolf in sheep's clothing. We are left in shame, misery and guilt, unable to help ourselves and doomed to failure and punishment. "Everything outside of Christ is held by Satan the ruler of the realm of darkness."

The truth of these statements is attested by all who have ever allowed Jesus to have possession of their lives. No darkness before the storm, no blackest night, nor no dungeon gloom can compare with the cold, hopeless, lifeless despair of those who have no assurance of immortality, no belief in prayer, no knowledge of forgiven sin, no cleansing and no belief in ultimate glorification and sanctification. The Light of the world is Jesus. Walk in the light as He is in the light.

REPENTENCE BRINGS LIGHT.

But now are ye light: "Believe in the light that ye may be children of light." Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of life (John 8:12)." When we turn to the Savior and are converted, we leave darkness behind and become surrounded with a light brighter than day. The attempt of man to do for himself what God offers to do for him is like trying to light a thousand candles to drive away the night. The sun rises and day is here. The Sun of Righteousness has risen with healing in His wings. Jesus changes more than the surface of things. Our faces smile because our hearts are glad. Burdens have been lifted. Jesus does not spread a luminous paint upon the public side of our dispositions. Our joy does not grow dim and disappear. The Christian does not have to wear a bold front on Sunday, sing Easter hymns and Christmas carols with abandon, then return with bowed head and sobbing heart to the grim realities of life. God through Christ shares His knowledge with us and takes our burden. "Cast your burden upon the Lord."

We have more than light about us. The light is to be in us. Jesus is an indwelling presence. We radiate the light He exhibited to His generation. "Ye are the light of the world

(Matt. 5:14).” As the hand becomes luminous which touches phosphorus, so we are to glow after having touched Him. What are to be the manifestations of this light? Holiness, knowledge, blessedness, sanctification, enlightenment, happiness, possession of truth, radiance, illumination, transfiguration experiences, moral transformation, breaking away from old associations and habits, new desires, unselfish service, generosity, laying by of treasures in heaven, a vision of Jesus, living in the world and yet not being of the world, and constant looking unto Him the Author and Finisher of our faith. Uprightness, sincerity and straightforwardness becomes conspicuous. God’s will is revealed to us. Light is shed upon that which was previously unknown.

There is another implication here. We are surrounded by light. We receive light; we are light and are to enlighten others. Truth is not a pearl to be hoarded and placed in the vault of our memory. Truth is a lighthouse on a dangerous reef. The Gospel is good news. The world is to know. We are to go upon the housetops and shout the glad news, Jesus can and will save to the uttermost all who come unto the Father by Him. “There is none other name given among men whereby ye must be saved.” “He that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.”

UNION GIVES LIGHT.

In the Lord: In the natural world, light is always conveyed through some medium. The flame must be fed. The supply needs replenishment if the light is to burn continuously. In ourselves there is hope, but also despair. We come to the end of our rope. The canyon leads into a pocket. The rivers run dry. But “in the Lord” we find our answer. As we unite ourselves to Him, we glow with light, like the Mazda bulb when placed in a living socket. The light of the Gospel dispels the shadows in our hearts by its radiant shining. Notice how intimate is our relationship with the Divine Son of God. Light comes to us not because we are serving the Lord as our Master or are with Him as confidant and friend, but light is ours because we are “in the Lord.” If we have this relationship the world should see God in us as it saw God in

Christ. Jesus was for ever revealing the Father. Do members of our families, our neighbors, our fellow-workmen, our schoolmates, our fellow club-members see evidences of the presence of Christ in us? Do our actions tell them we have been with Jesus? Does our life clearly tell them that we are being lighted upon our way by the light from above? The carbon of the arc light glows only when in contact with the electrical current. If we are sitting in darkness, draw near to the Son of God. "There is life for a look at the crucified One." To see Him is to love Him. To love Him is to follow Him. To follow Him is to continue with Him until death brings us into the presence of God. If you do not feel as you once felt, if your heart still has an unsatisfied yearning and hungering, if you feel in the dark about some of the great issues of your life, you may find fulfillment and satisfaction on your knees. Cry out to the Lord for mercy; confess your sins; in your despair, lift your voice, "Lord, save me or I perish" and God who is no respecter of persons will visit you. Light always comes from above.

A DIVINE COMMAND.

Walk as children of light: Show what you are since Christ found you and not what you were before salvation. Our fellowship with God implies separation from the world and all ungodliness in order that we may live in a manner pleasing to God. Our Christian experience makes changes in us. We cannot be confused with those who do not trust in God. "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin (I John 1:5-7)."

Our possession of the truth effects a transformation. Radium not only shines, but also alters everything about it. The teachings of Jesus change everything in our lives. "A new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true

light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness, even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes (I John 2:8-11)."

Christianity is not passive. We have a journey to take; work to perform. Walk as children of light. If we are ever tempted to go back into the old life, and who is not, put the temptation behind us. Satan tries to keep us from heaven; every allurement is given to draw us away from the life of sacrifice which must characterize us if we are to reach our goal. The God in us, the inner light will help us and hold us true to our finer self and develop in us that growth, light, health, hope, freedom and activity which is needed. As children of light we are to possess holiness, truth, knowledge and purity. If we are sons of God who is light, we will become children of light.

Our walk as children of light expresses itself in clear ways. Holiness will be one trait. The Christian walks on high levels. He is known for his integrity, moral sturdiness, business scruples, faithful discharge of all obligations, honorable recognition of debts, regard for the rights of others and refusai to compromise himself and the cause of Christ. Hope is another clear indication of the walk of the Christian. Believers have received new vision. All things are new. A better day is ahead. The Shepherd who walks ahead opens paths for them. Far stretching vistas are revealed to them. They may walk in the valley of the shadow of death, but He is with them holding their hand. "The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want." Thanksgiving always breaks from the lips of the Christian. An all-seeing eye looking down from above knows what is best. Believers bring their lives to Him and say, "Do with me as thou wilt." Praise for all His manifold goodness is ever at the tip of the tongue. "What is man that thou are mindful of him or the son of man that thou visitest him?"

Various characteristics of this walk as children of light are mentioned in the New Testament. We are to "walk in

newness of life (Rom. 6:4).” Let us walk honestly; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in striving and envying (Rom. 13:13).” “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh (Gal. 5:16).” “Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God (Col. 1:10).” “Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called (Eph. 4:1).”

In one sense this light is light reflected from God just as the planets having no light of their own yet shine with reflected glory. “The life of Jesus is to be made manifest in our body (II Cor. 4:10).” In another sense this light is an implanted glory. “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (II Cor. 4:6).” In any sense, being a Christian carries with it an obligation to holy living. As children of light walk in holiness, hope and thanksgiving. We pass from darkness into light when we walk along the King’s highway.

IX.

THE FRUIT OF LIGHT

"For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." —EPH. 5:9.

LIGHT GIVES LIFE.

For the fruit of the Spirit: The context would justify the preferred translation "for the fruit of the Light." Paul has been speaking of children of light and urging us to walk in a befitting manner. Darkness has no place in the life of a true Christian. This parenthetical phrase is a conclusion. Those disobedient to the heavenly vision and those who have never seen the vision cannot be expected to have the fruits of the Spirit of God. Living for Jesus does very definite things. Concrete changes occur in life. Fruits are borne. Results are the reward of growth and consistent effort to be Christ-like. All the various graces make one perfectly whole. Notice the word "fruit" is used here, not "fruits." Gal. 5:22, 23, enumerate nine evidences of the Light of the Spirit. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Col. 3:12 phrases them differently, "Put on therefore bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering." These are born of the Spirit, are nourished by the Spirit and bear fruit because of the Spirit. The grace of God working continuously in our hearts produces this evidence of its presence and this proof of its power. Those who are not children of God do not have this testimony to give. These fruits are not natural with men; they come only by plan of the Divine Creator and through that divine illumination within which floods the soul, heart and mind with the Spirit of God Himself, ripening the habits which gradually develop as an expression of man's love of God and God's love of man—feeding and nourishing him.

Light is a great power in the world; light ripens fruit and gives it color and sweetness. The sweet fruit grows at the tips of the branches where the sun can daily warm and bathe in a glory of celestial light that which drinks in warmth, light and vitality. Sour fruit may be found in the dark, shaded interiors of heavy leafage. Those who bask in the sunlight of His presence glow and have dispositions which sweeten as the years go by.

Christ is the great Light which shone in the darkness to reveal God. Christ came to scatter darkness. The Book sheds light because it tells of Him who is Light and the process by which we by the grace of God and association with Him can in fellowship, prayer, study, obedience, and submission be made to glow with the Light Divine. "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet." God's people are called "children of Light." Their character, disposition and life glows; their faces possess radiance. Those who live in sin love shadows and hide from the accusing presence of God, like Adam and Eve after Satan had caused their downfall. Darkness claims them. Light and God are synonymous. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all (I John 1:5)." Put alongside that verse, this one, "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin (I John 1:7)." One who loved the Lord wished his tombstone to be cast in iron with these words to testify for his spirit which had gone to be with its Maker: "Life—Love—Light." He should have added for clarity the word "God" or "Christ." Life in Christ springs from love for Christ and brings the Light of Christ into our hearts and the life of the church. "He is the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Our chief concern is to have Christ in our heart.

The farmer sows seed into prepared soil. God sows sunshine, rain, and light from above, and in due season a harvest is reaped. Man sows good intentions and repentance. God sows Christ in the heart and we bring forth every manner of fruit acceptable unto the Great Husbandman. The fruitful life is that of the Christian. Man's way is to cultivate morality; God's way is to make the tree good and then by laws of

nature produce good fruit. First get Christ in the heart; have the Light of the world in you and your life will have light. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil; for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh (Luke 6:45)." John's tree of life bore twelve manner of fruit; Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, has three—the good, the right, the true.

UPRIGHT IN HEART.

Is in all goodness: The following three words have a progressive and close relationship in meaning. In goodness we have our relationship to God; in righteousness our relationship to others and in truth our relationship to self. In goodness we worship, in righteousness we act, and in truth we think. In goodness we look up, in righteousness we look out and in truth we look in. In goodness we see God, in righteousness we see those about us, and in truth we see self. In goodness we see the world above us, in righteousness we see the world about us and in truth we see the world within us.

"All" is a most important word. So many of us are lopsided in our development. Every form of virtue, every degree of morality and holiness is to be found in us. The Christian strives towards sinlessness. "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect." The Christian (I Cor. 13:7) "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." "Pray that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power (II Thess. 1:11)." Good and evil are frequently contrasted in Scripture. "See, I have set before thee this day life and good and death and evil (Deut. 30:15)." "But to do good, and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased (Heb. 13:16)." "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die (Rom. 5:7)." Other passages distinguish good and evil. The law said "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things. Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy

heart." We are never to let up, but to continue faithful unto the end of our days.

Good is opposed to all evil and malice. It implies gentleness, amiability, kindness, integrity of the heart and disposition, right relations with God, man and self. Some distinguish between benevolence which is kindness in feeling, and beneficence which is kindness or goodness in action. Goodness is that quality which adapts a thing to the end for which it was designed and renders it serviceable. We speak of a good tree, good soil and a good man. Good is an inherent quality. If we are good we will be good. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin (I John 3:9)." Goodness occurs only in the Bible. The Greeks did not have such a word. The Ephesian Christian was urged to be gentle, long-suffering and patient. Goodness is perhaps mentioned first in this trio because it is the most lacking of all the virtues. An unlovely, unattractive Christian causes goodness to be shunned. Few realize that loving Christ and living for Him bring goodness. A young man on being asked what it was that had led him to Jesus, replied, "It was the way Mr. Drummond laid his hand upon my shoulder and looked into my face, that led me to Christ."

We are to be good because we are good. This goodness takes a number of forms. It will have to be varied if we are to shine for Jesus in this present evil world. But when all our actions are placed together our works will be good. Light appears as a single color, yet when it is broken up by a prism we see green, purple, red, blue, yellow and other colors. "Be fruitful in every good work (Col. 1:10)." Paul gives us the three primary colors—red, yellow and blue; goodness, righteousness and truth.

JUST IN CONDUCT.

And righteousness: "Faith, if it has not works, is dead, being alone (Jas. 2:17)." Righteousness is opposed to crookedness and dishonesty. It is inseparable from the highest type of goodness. Right treatment of others, adherence to the rule of right, moral excellence, employment of all those means which would make a man right, conformity to the law and nature of

God, uprightness, moral rectitude, strict adherence to the law of duty, faithful renderings to every man of that which is due him, unvarying fidelity to all duties and responsibilities—all this is included in righteousness. Religion champions right. Justice can never be divorced from the Spirit of Christ. We are to observe God's law and respect the rights of others in honesty and purity. Christ was a carpenter. There was no occupation in which he could have better learned exactness, precision and practical geometry. The rule and plummet demanded straightness, true angles, close fittings, solid workmanship, due allowances, straight lines, perfect curves and balances. We need this same straightness in life. Perhaps that was why Jesus was a Man among men in His human relationships and understanding. He was always trying to straighten men and put their feet in straight paths. Morality and truth are forms of straightness and the eternal fitness of things. Jesus learned waste of crookedness in wood, then began working with human material. Jesus is still working in the world.

HONEST LIVING.

And truth: By truth is meant religious truth, moral affirmations, the law of God which is unvariable, sincerity of purpose, right living and good living. Truth is opposed to all lying, falsehood, hypocrisy, deceit of heart, shame and pretense. "Whatsoever things are true (Phil. 4:8)" claim us perpetually. No affectation of speech, thought or action, no make-believe morality or religion, can pass muster. How bitter was Christ's denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees who loved to pray on street corners and then rob widows of their earnings and defraud them by hard bargaining. Someone asked a friend concerning a mutual acquaintance, "Is he a Christian?" The reply was direct: "I cannot tell; I never lived with him." Truth has been spoken of as being the man at the wheel to bring the ship safely to port and deliver him to the gates of heaven "Speaking the truth in love (Eph. 4:15)."

The consistent life needs all of these major virtues and fruits of the light. If there is just goodness, one is apt to be

too soft and be termed "goody-goody." Lime is needed in water to harden bones. Water as a liquid is insufficient. Righteousness is apt to be too hard. To speak the truth even if it hurts may not always be wisdom. Straight speaking, without tact and love, may inflict incurable wounds. High principle, honor and fidelity must be tempered and covered with truth and goodness. The rock is hard and cold until it is covered with truth and goodness. The rock is hard and cold until it is covered with soft mosses or rich earth. Truth frequently hurts; transparency is not always desirable. The best of motives may be brutal in its frankness. Live, therefore, with these graces bound in the heart, and conduct will not be improper nor will it ever be confused with works of darkness. The fruits of the light is goodness, righteousness and truth.

X.

WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE UNTO THE LORD

"Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord."—EPH. 5:10.

THE TEST.

Proving: Because we have passed from darkness into light and are walking as children of light, we will struggle to make every act pass the test of acceptability unto the Lord. Before we try to please men or ourselves, let us seek the favor of Jesus, and live for Him. We will advance as His will becomes ours, and ours His. As our judgments become His, we will please Him. As Christians we will want to put all His promises to the test. His teachings are proven to be truth by our experiences. As one tests coins separating counterfeit from the genuine, so we divide good from evil, mammon from God, and render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's and to God the things which are God's. While in darkness we lived in sin, ignorance of God's will and direct opposition to God; but now our renewed wills lead us to the truth.

To prove means to search out, experiment, experience, approve, practice and exercise great care and diligence. Faith and works go hand in hand. Prayer and practice are inseparable twins; hope and reality journey together. We are to teach. Our world of reality in Christian experience is not darkness but light. The one in deep shadow feels and gropes about not knowing what is about him! every nerve is tense, every muscle is on the alert. Unknown, unseen dangers lurk about the believer on his way. "God tries the heart"; He tries every spirit whether they be of God. "God shall try every man's work," but man travels along a well-trodden way. He does not have to hew his way through forest and jungle. He goes along the King's highway, following Jesus and a vast company of those redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb who have gone before. The

Egyptians with all their wisdom were in great darkness with little to remove the terrors of ignorance; the children of Israel moved in light which assured them of God's care.

Conversion brings light on the penalty of sin; the way of the transgressor is hard. Conversion shows us the way of salvation. They called His name Jesus because He saved the people from their sins. By the light of the Gospel we see a lost world. Knowing the power of the gospel is to every one who believeth, we extend the hope of its joy, comfort, forgiveness and blessed hope. We can say, "Once I was blind but now I see." The hope of the world is Jesus. Try it.

"Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God (Rom. 12:2)." "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good (I Thess. 5:21)." How are we to prove all things? 1. By the Word of God. The Bible is the standard of measurement, the yardstick of conduct. In the Bible we find both what we shall not do and also what we shall do. Have we done wrong and sinned? The Bible tells us the plain unvarnished truth. Let the Book speak for itself. Prayerfully ask for guidance. The message is simple enough for a child and sufficiently profound for a philosopher. The fisherman can find his rule of faith and practice and the ruler of the synagogue can discover whether he deserves the denunciation of Jesus. 2. We can test ourselves by noting what effect any given course of action has upon ourselves, our habits of devotion, our communion with God, the vitality of our prayer with God, our love for God's house and our desire to serve Him. Do we fulfill the law by loving God with our whole heart, mind and soul, and our neighbor as ourself? 3. We can prove whether God's will is being done by noting the degree of our spiritual health. Do we find happiness in doing His will? One asked a professing Christian "Are you happy in your religion?" We must put everything to the acid test of His approval if we would walk as a true child of God. Would Jesus be found here? would a blush of shame come if Jesus were suddenly to appear among us? if He should come now to call us to be with Him forever would we be ready to meet Him and go with Him?

Weymouth translates "proving"—"learn in your experience." Christianity is more than a profession or a creed. It is life, vigorous, complete, joyous, enduring to the end. It is said that Audubon, the great ornithologist, wished to write the first complete book upon the history and description of the birds of America. He persisted through thick and thin, endured all hardships, but lived to see the work completed in masterful fashion. The Christian sees his hope of glory and a gospel intended for every creature, so he persists unto the end and sees the fulfillment of his hopes clothed with immortality.

THE CHRISTIAN STANDARD.

What is acceptable: All things are to be pleasing unto Him, the small, the great, the inconsequential and the important. Peter cut off the ear of one who came to lay hands on Jesus; the motive was good, but the act was worthy of condemnation. Later, Peter learned to restrain his temper and avoid that which might dishonor God, offend His will and create discord among believers. Followers of Jesus are to please God as Jesus pleased His heavenly Father. Our great task is to please God, to love Him and do all that love directs. "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Regulate conduct by the balance wheel of God's law. Continuously test conduct. The dry-goods salesman has a mark upon the counter by which sales are tested. Judgment is inadequate; a yard may not be quite a yard, so each sale must be according to the yard upon the counter. We daily test our life by His. Perfection is the goal. "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (I Thess. 5:23)." Are we right or wrong? Do we walk worthily or unworthily? Conduct pleasing to God is the standard. What is well pleasing to God? How great an abyss exists between what we are and what He would have us be! Sin separates us; sin displeases God. David had Uriah placed in the thick of the battle and ordered support withdrawn so Uriah might be killed to leave the way open for David to marry Uriah's wife. "But the thing which David had

done displeased the Lord (II Sam. 11:27)," and punishment followed (II Sam. 12:11). Faith in Christ pleases God. "Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou has seen me, thou has believed; blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed (John 20:29)." Obedience is pleasing. "What doeth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy and walk humbly with thy God (Micah 6:8)." "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul (Deut. 10:12)." "To obey God is better than to sacrifice (I Sam. 15: 22)". "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil (Isa. 1:13-19)." "Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor; and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow (Jer. 22:3)." "These are things that ye shall do; speak ye every man the truth to his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates (Zech. 8:16)." "I desired mercy and not sacrifice (Hos. 6:6)." "This is life eternal that they might know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent (John 17:3)."

WHAT PLEASES GOD.

Unto the Lord: Jesus Christ might be added to read "Our Lord Jesus Christ." All and every part of this name has a meaning. Christ is the Lord of the conscience, to whom we are responsible for all inward and outward acts. Christ is God. We live in His presence and in the light of His life. We seek His favor constantly as we prove what is acceptable unto Him and discard all else. What is distasteful to the Lord needs to be removed as a growth of unnatural tissue needs to be removed before it becomes cancerous. Only then may we find peace and contentment. "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works (Ecc. 9:7)." The question is not one of our apparent advantage or loss, but is God's will being done?

Rash action may be disastrous to body and soul. The right way is not always immediately apparent. We need to wait for His leading. Pray for light and the conviction that this is the Lord's will. Then nothing can turn us away. There is frequent difficulty in discovering what is true, right, good or evil. "By their fruits shall ye know them." The spirit of truth convicts the world of righteousness, sin and judgment. "Walk in the light as he is in the light." Get in the intimate fellowship of the inner circle and all will be well.

XI.

OUR DUTY TO THE SINNER

"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them." —EPH. 5:11.

TOTAL ABSTINENCE.

And have no fellowship: When ordered to play the drums for his captors a drummer boy replied, "God forbid the king's drums should ever be played for rebels." The Christian is to live apart from the world and yet in it. Our life on earth compels many associations in neighborhoods, employment surroundings and school contacts which are contrary to our professions and principles, but we are not to yield to temptations offered. Our calling forbids having a share in the life about us, becoming partners to sin, delighting in vice, compromising our ideals of conduct, or lowering our standards until we have so much in common with Satan as to feel a real congeniality in the things of the world, their interests, feelings and views.

Our fellowship is to be with God, and with those who are reborn and serving the King. "God is light and in him is no darkness at all (I John 1:5, 6)." Light and darkness have no fellowship with each other. Both cannot occupy the same space at the same time. Neither can we have simultaneous fellowship with darkness and light. Christians are light bearers to give the Light of the world to those in darkness. "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate and touch no unclean thing, saith the Lord." An army officer was invited to be present at a banquet where the entertainment was not in accord with his views. He felt his duty implied acceptance, but not approval of the program which followed. His action may help others similarly situated. "When I find it my duty to attend such an occasion, I endeavor to see Jesus seated in the place opposite me and try to think, do and say what He

would have me. As long as I keep this line of thought alive, I find that I am free from danger." The same aloofness has been expressed by another who occupied a coach where an English Lord speaking to a companion used language hardly befitting his title. When the lord turned to loudly and carelessly speak to others riding in the same coach with him, a fellow passenger quietly administered this rebuke, "My Lord, maintain your rank." So Jesus says, Maintain your place as a son of God; do not forget whose you are and whom you are serving (I Cor. 5:10). We are not to share sin with the wicked, but to be constantly on the alert with those who are without lest we lose our standing and position.

We do not work in a vacuum; the Devil is always on the alert. Let us be prepared to resist his onslaughts. Light cannot be defiled by darkness or filth; it purifies but cannot be contaminated. If we walk in the light as He was in the light, we will have fellowship with God but not with Satan. The devil is pleased when Christians sanction his programs and efforts. Satan tempts, but it always takes more than one to sin. Have no fellowship with sinners. Do personal work with them, win their friendship, maintain their confidence, but have no fellowship in their sins. Christ was called a winebibber and a glutton by His critics. Christ certainly did not participate in the vices of those who invited Him to be their guest. He won their confidence, then led them into the truth and the light.

Having no fellowship means keep from committing sin; abstain from teaching wrong by word or inference, and neither by implication or act consent, agree to, cooperate with, commend, countenance, defend, excuse, counsel with, or be accessory to sin (I Sam. 3:13). By necessity, civil, religious or moral bonds we may be united or related to those in sin, but we must never yield to their sons or share their vices lest we be denied fellowship with God.

NO REAL SATISFACTION.

With the unfruitful: One of the penalties of having fellowship with that which is forbidden by God is to have "no inheritance in the kingdom of God." The sinner could find no

real satisfaction in heaven. His enjoyment on earth is that of the soap bubble soon to burst. His happiness is transient; his harvest slender; his work useless and without lasting results. No permanent benefit is apparent. His house has been built on sand near the water line. How many have found this to their sorrow. A supposed treasure is worthless and useless. Lay up therefore treasure in heaven, where eternal values reside. Possess the pearl of great price beside which all others are but paste.

The Bible distinguishes between the fruit of goodness and the works of evil, "between the works of the flesh and the fruits of the spirit (Gal. 5:19-23)." Wrong appears to flourish, flower and even bear fruit, but its benefits fall off before harvest leaving nothing to justify life and growth. God warns us of the futility. Fruit is of the Spirit. We fall outside the will of God. The fruit of goodness is God-likeness. Efforts to the contrary meet the lament of I Cor. 14:14, "My understanding is unfruitful," or the conclusion of Isa. 17:11, "The harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow." Activity is not always fruitful. We can be busy about a lot of things and yet be treading a treadmill, getting no further than a squirrel racing in a revolving cage. How many will say when they meet their Lord, "I accumulated a fortune, I was known as a wise man, I was affiliated with many enterprises, but I come empty-handed before the throne of grace"? We create appetites for what does not satisfy; we permit ourselves to do the popular thing and drink our souls away. Many during Prohibition days learned the value of orange juice, grape juice and milk. Health was more universal. But with repeal of the laws and the opening of grills, these nourishing drinks are forgotten for intoxicating spirits. Doctors, hospitals, dentists, public institutions and the dole system have to assist in rescue work. How unfruitful of health, happiness, wealth, employment and salvation were the works of the tempter who offered laughter, companionship, oblivion and night with the day to those who would enter into the "fulness of life."

Good intention can be realities only with God's help. God does not offer stone for the satisfaction of hunger or sorrow

for the answer to our prayers. Bad company has been likened to a nail driven into a post. The nail can be easily withdrawn after a few strokes of the hammer, but when it has been driven to its head great difficulty attends its removal. Oak-galls resemble fruit, but open them and black powder and emptiness meet you instead of palatable fruit.

We feel the danger of an unfruitful life in this life. Memories linger; conscience is troubled by a sense of having failed. The old sin and former associations keep coming to the foreground. Like scars from operations, the wound heals but the marks remain as an evidence of what has been. Real unfruitfulness is apparent in eternity. Having had no fellowship with God in this world we pass on to be eternally separated from Him and those of our loved ones who denied themselves here to possess heaven forever.

ULTIMATE DEATH AND LOSS.

Works of darkness: We might say "the darkness." There is only one darkness and one light. Our choice is between one or the other. Each has to make the choice. "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve". . . Having given yourself to Jesus leave the old life behind. Have no regrets. Turn steadfastly towards Jerusalem, and Him "who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son (Col. 1:13)." Only when we stand in the light and look toward darkness will we wonder how we could have ever thought ourselves happy apart from Him. "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life (Rom. 6:21, 22)."

We are to have fellowship with people but not with their works. Fruit cannot be produced in spiritual darkness any more than it can ripen in physical night. Sin loves the night, hence it fears no fruits of righteousness. Let us take stock of ourselves and discover whether we are of the darkness or the light. A certain merchant who thought himself insolvent would not take inventory lest he find himself to be in a state of bankruptcy. How many fear to come to church, to pray,

to read their Bible or have the soul-searching tests of evangelistic gatherings for fear they will find themselves to be lost in sin and in need of separation from the old life. Let us face ourselves now. Just where do we stand in the light of the knowledge of God? If we live in darkness we will know it. If there is any doubt, it should be removed. The pilot of a revenue-cutter was asked whether he knew all the rocks along the rugged New England coast? "No," he replied, "but I know where there *are* no rocks."

Two men were digging a well. After a week's absence from their work, a lighted candle was lowered to the bottom of the well. Before getting down into the hole, it fluttered and went out. Poisonous gas was there. A rousing brush fire was built in the well after which the candle was again lighted. This time its flame was clear and steady and the men went down to finish their task. Christ has tested our way. He was in all points tempted, yet without sin; He entered the grave; He tells us to follow Him. The way is clear as long as we go where He commands. Danger lurks beyond this zone of safety. Twinges of conscience, unrest, disturbance, unhappiness, a sense of failure and vain show is apt to be the result of foolish talking, filth and jesting. The end of darkness is ultimate loss. "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life (Rom. 6:23)."

A DIRECT COMMAND.

But rather reprove them: Our attitude towards evil is to be more than aloofness, separation and no fellowship. Positive reproof is implied and commanded. Others must be told of dangers we have discovered. Knowing that "every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light lest his deeds be reproved (John 3:19, 20)," we fail in our duty if we fail to tell others of our glorious salvation so they too may come to the Light and be saved. The Christian is forever calling others to come to Jerusalem and be saved. The Christian is not fulfilling his duty if he is silent against evil, and fails to tell others the necessity of a new heart. Reform and statutes are ineffective unless life is changed. The first evidence of a turn towards the new life may be the consciousness of be-

ing on the wrong path. Christ cleansed the temple, but the money-changers returned, for within three years He cleansed it again. There is every reason to believe that the temple was again inhabited by money-changers after Christ's crucifixion, for in the course of a few years it was destroyed. We must protest, oppose and publish the hideousness of gambling, intemperance and sin in all its phases. The Spirit shedding light in the hearts of men will turn them from wickedness to righteousness and show them their true sinful selves until in desperation guilt will drive them to the Cross.

A holy life is the best possible reproof of sin. A sense of purity and happiness in Him sheds a radiance about us which cannot be confused. The sinlessness of Jesus angered His accusers. The righteousness of Jesus made the Pharisees so frantic that they sought directly and indirectly to ensnare Him in theological traps to kill Him. Jesus was showing the people how a black heart might lie beneath hands, feet and garments ceremonially clean. A walk in newness of life, in honesty and wisdom, a walk worthy of the Lord and our vocation will prove itself. One holy life can do more to condemn and reprove wickedness than a thousand denunciations. One marble column can put plaster columns to shame. But with sincerity must come a definite effort and desire to convict, convert and convince those who sin. The Greek word "reprove" implies a question propounded, a false reasoning corrected and an error disproved in the name of God. Reproving necessarily involves intercourse but not fellowship with the one being reproved. We turn the light of Gospel truth on that which is worldly and selfish. Avoiding participation and expressing disapproval we bring them into the light; the Spirit leads them to accept Christ as their Savior as Peter, John and Paul accepted Him and walked in the light from that day onward. This calls for Christian courage. "Ye are the light of the world let your light so shine before men that they seeing your good works may glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matt. 5:14-16)." A simple, direct and complete living of the Christian life is the best possible argument for Christ. Jesus said the promised Spirit would convict the

world of their sins. It did. It is doing it. It will continue to do so.

Silence may frequently be interpreted as approval. Those who do not vote are considered indifferent. Every one who did not vote for a continuance of the Eighteenth Amendment might have been considered in favor of its abolishment. We must be active and constantly alert for truth in Him. The silent church may well be considered a dying church. When, on one occasion, a man was invited to participate in an act which his conscience did not approve he promptly answered "Sir, I am a man that fears God." No other argument or reproof needed to be given. That was sufficient.

Reproof can be expected from Christians. If they do not reprove, who will? As imitators of God, as inheritors of the kingdom of God, as those who have come out of darkness into light, as commanded to bear fruits of light, as freed from the implications of verse 12 and 15, we have a duty to reprove those who are losing their souls and hindering the spread of the gospel by life, by speech and by active effort. One evil law may undo the work of generations. Preach the Gospel, but thank God for those who plow the soil by vigorous alertness in condemning evil. Christ was bitter in His denunciation of the scribes. They needed it. The air was cleared because of that outburst. Light was given us that we might shine and scatter darkness.

XII.

SHUN WORKS OF DARKNESS

"For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret."
—EPH. 5:12.

EXPOSURE IS A DELICATE TASK.

For it is a shame: We should hesitate to mention those things which are evil lest by so doing we create a desire which will not rest until the curious hunger has been satisfied. In view of the distastefulness of the subject, God's hatred of sin and the delicate nature of what needs to be done, the less said about it the better. Modern fiction makes everything as realistic as possible by leaving out none of the gory details. The press runs an extra for the scandals and secret sins of the great and near great. Sermons must be preached, lectures given, films dramatized, plays written and news released by radio to tell the world all about the errors, tragedies and sins of life. There is a serious question as to the good accomplished. Young minds, weak minds, susceptible minds, and yielding minds are influenced by the sights, words, and descriptions which appeal to the senses and they are tempted to duplicate the situations described in their own lives. Murder, robbery, gratification of lustful desires, gambling, divorce, common marriage and infidelity of all sorts can be traced to the indelicate, indecent, improper exposure of the sins of today and yesterday. It is sickening to be constantly confronted with the sordid in life instead of the better qualities. Every house has a waste pail, but why bring it into the parlor? If less were said about moral scandals of the day there would be less scandal to report. Be constructive. The sermon on the mount with its beatitudes is a model in this respect.

DANGER IN PUBLICITY.

Even to speak: We have been cautioned not even to name certain sins if we would redeem the time. Talking about false doctrines and divisions spreads them. Better pour water upon a fire than stamp it out and scatter the sparks for the wind to broadcast. Satan is delighted with free advertisement. Persecution has resulted in the rapid growth of many an idea.

The Christian can afford to be silent under reproof, but not silent in testimony. Walk in Jesus' way, breathe His Spirit, and people will soon find it out. Holiness can stand a lot of abuse and censure. Those in the wrong will try to spread all sorts of malicious slander in their effort to discredit those known to be right. Gossip has a sharp tongue. Slander crucified our Savior. Minute description of sin is apt to lead others into the way of temptation by giving information which can never be forgotten and may lead eventually to the formation of the reproved habit. A museum at Naples contains a number of objects dug from the ruins of Pompeii which are so vile in nature as to require a special room barred to the general public; only those with a special pass may enter. Many true facts of life should be barred from the general public and shown only to the police, social worker, doctor and those dealing with the scientific solution of social problems. The gospel must enter the vilest den, but only to preach redemption and tell the lost how they can be saved. Frequently converts testify with too much embellishment of their past life. It would be better to confine their description of sin to personal work with the lost. It is a shame to even speak of some things. The sinfulness of sin is to be clearly stated at all costs. Silence may appear to give consent. It is best to imitate Christ and face the tempter with words of Scripture and a holy life. Christ dismissed temptation by saying, "Get thee behind me Satan."

AN UNLIMITED CHOICE.

Of those things: We can always speak of Christ and His message to the world. The glorious story of His sacrifice and purchase price is always new and helpful. The realities of

prayer, the way to faith and union with Christ, the certainties of religion, the approaching day of redemption, the second coming of the Lord, the penalty of sin, the rapid and unknown visit of death, the emptiness of life—what an array of subjects from which to draw for conversation! With life flying with increasing speed, why choose the low? When water is clear, why dive down, burrow in the mud, and stir up the bottom? Speak of the Light, the beautiful Example, the sinless way, the perfect Man, and avoid those subjects which require whispers with no ladies or no gentlemen present. Secrecy and darkness are the atmosphere of sin. Righteousness is unafraid of the light of publicity. It walks in the day.

GENTILES VERSUS CHRISTIANS.

Which are done of them: Gentiles, the unbelievers, the godless and the Christless are not to rule our lives. We are to live upon a higher plane. Christ stood in relief from His contemporaries; He rose above foulness and the common man. You could never accuse Him of being just a nominal follower. He went all the way. The unconverted seek to hide in the multitude. They do what everybody else appears to do and approve. They can always be located in the crowd. Isa. 3:9, Be sure that God will “declare their sin as Sodom and hide them not.” We do not want to be in the company of Sodomites when Jesus comes. The converted are not to ape the ways of the world. To wear the costumes of the world is to be considered of the world. Stand out.

HIDDEN VICES.

In secret: The reason for secrecy is a desire to hide from God. Adam and Eve did not wish to face God so they hid their faces, forgetting that all things are revealed to God. The world has eyes even in the night. Someone eventually appears who was a witness to the crime committed. Many wish to hide even from themselves, but this is impossible. Dreams frequently prove accusing fingers. Relaxation is impossible until sin has been confessed. A disturbed conscience,

shame of improper conduct and fear of possible consequences are all reasons for trying secretly to do what is known to be wrong in the light. Right never needs to tiptoe about the house or hide unobserved. Sin is always spoken of as a work of darkness, springing from ignorance of God. Knowledge of God and a complete understanding of Him will lead to efforts to please Him and be near Him.

Sin done under cover of darkness is apt to desire companions in misery. Darkness gives a false boldness, and the unwarranted courage to go into greater depths. "The eye of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight saying, No eye shall see me: and disguiseth his face (Job 24:14, 15)." "For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid, that shall not be known (Luke 12:2)." God found out Achan. He will find out our sin. At the day of judgment he will set our sins in order before us (Ps. 50:21). "The Lord will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart (I Cor. 4:5)." "He that covereth his sin shall not prosper, but whoso that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy (Prov. 28:13)." "Who can understand his errors; cleanse thou me from secret faults (Ps. 19:12)."

Even though it be shameful to mention certain things, we must speak and by the holiness of our life let Christ speak through us at all times. Such Christlikeness will frequently convict the sinner from the error of his ways.

XIII.

THE LIGHT OF GOD

"But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light, for whatsoever doth make manifest is light."

—EPH. 5:13.

A RESULT OF LIGHT.

But all things that are reproved: This positive assertion concerns all works of the flesh, darkness, secret lusts, false pleasures and the whole scheme of living that is without God and without hope. Light is the agent of this work of reproof. Sin cannot be winked at, tolerated or treated as a matter of no consequence. God commanded the prophet to "declare unto my people their transgressions and in the house of Jacob their sins." The Word of God, the life of His Son and the testimony of the Spirit are always condemning and reproofing that which is of the night and sin. Everlasting presence in heaven depends upon it. The present tense is sometimes used here to mean "all things when being reproved by light are revealed in their true character." "For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life (Prov. 6:23)." "The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise (Prov. 15:31)." Believers in possession of the light are to search out darkness to dispel it. At times evil needs to be drawn into the open to remove it. The root of a weed needs to be completely separated from soil before it will die. Bring wrong from its den and expose it by a better way of life.

THE FINAL TEST.

Are made manifest by the light: Spiritual light is always revealing the hidden by turning into light what was darkness. The truth of the gospel shows us our need of a Savior and our

helpless state until we have found Him. Knowledge of His will for us and vision of what He can make of us causes us to see how cheap and common we are even at our best. Who can be proud with God standing near? Grace to overcome is a gift of God, and not of ourselves. Our accomplishments are but tinsel in comparison with gold, when viewing the work of our Master.

Paul tells us we are made light in the Lord, and have the task of shining for Him. Those now in sin may shine when they have come to the light and live in the light. We are to shine in a darkened world, to bring the truth and love of God into the hearts of men. The devil, not wanting light, will resist, but in spite of his efforts to the contrary, we are to open our eyes, see things as they are, and call sin by its right name. The Assyrians believed if demons once saw their faces in a mirror, the sight of their own hideousness would frighten them away. Our duty is to hold up the light of Christ. Talk about Him and quote Him, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path (Ps. 119:105)." As the light of day discloses what was hidden by cover of night, so Jesus shining in the heart of man reveals to him what he needs to know about himself, what we have done and what will be the punishment for misconduct. The Son of God came to earth to reveal God's hatred of sin. Man was living as though it did not matter, as though God might overlook, or as though His punishment could not be very great if at all. Sinners seemed to be getting away with it. The righteous were asking whether it paid them to sacrifice and be true. Jesus showed them the profit of good. The wheat and the tares might be left standing side by side, but in the day of judgment a separation would take place. Hell was made as real as heaven, and reward as concrete as punishment. After this revelation was made, provision for escape was made clear. None need be lost. The light was revealed to enable the lost to be saved. Instead of fleeing like bats into darkness, turn to and live in the light. Live in the light of day like birds and flowers and creatures of beauty.

THE PROOF.

For whatsoever doth make manifest: Paul having asserted that all things reprov'd are made manifest by the light, now proves it. Whatever is illumined by the truth, not for idle curiosity, but for the distinct purpose of telling the difference between good and evil will check evil which, condemned by the light, will be altered by the light. If the sinner wilfully continues in wrongdoing after the distastefulness of sin to God is made clear, he can no longer claim exemption or excuse on the grounds of ignorance. Unfortunately all evil does not come into the light or change into light. Few of the blossoms on an apple tree bear fruit. Only a small proportion of good resolutions bear results. Yet we must never stop shining. Light must continue to shine unto the end. We are mirrors to reflect light. Let us keep reflecting surfaces.

LIKE JESUS.

Is light: That which light touches is frequently made luminous. Spiritual truth diffuses itself and gives visibility. Light has healing power. Frequently disease stops its inroads when light and air reach the wound. The Word of God is able to convert, heal, sanctify and save all men. There is power in the Word and in the blood of Jesus to illumine and sanctify all who come under its power. Someone has said truth is to holiness what light is to vision. Light is not an eye. Light has no ability to remove blindness but where there is sight, light opens up unlimited vistas of beauty and truth. We are to let the Word of God dwell in our hearts in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. Its presence there will bring light and scatter error as the rising sun drives mists away with its ascending rays. Light and darkness cannot be co-existent. It has been said, "the presence of a saint does not give the devil elbow room to do his tricks." "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven (Matt. 5:16)."

We are to be light. Inability to do a great many things is no disgrace. Since Jesus lived among men we have no

excuse for living in darkness concerning God's will for the lost world, and God's will for those who follow Him. Let us shine and reveal darkness by the testimony of what God has brought into our life. We may not all feel like boldly confessing our sins, but we can all let our light shine for Him. Our influence, our simplicity of belief, our unfailing loyalty to Him, our confidence in Him and our hope in His promises will all be light. Whatever makes Christ known to others is Christ in us. Christ, in us, is the hope of glory.

XIV.

THE CHRISTIAN'S MESSAGE

"Wherefore he saith, awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee light."—EPH. 5:14.

DIVINE SANCTION.

Wherefore he saith: Jews and Gentiles need no longer live in darkness and despair. Light has come into the world. Yet how many are spiritually asleep and dead. There is urgent need of bringing evil into the light of Christ's presence to have it removed by His gracious Spirit. This light is accessible to all; it is capable of doing all things; it is obtainable for the asking. The Christian has a definite and unescapable obligation for the asking. The Christian has a definite and unescapable obligation to let light shine, to abstain from fellowship with darkness and to redeem the time. "Wherefore" recalls verses eight, eleven and thirteen. It is high time for Christians who have received light from Jesus, the Light of the world, to shine constantly. Light gives life.

The pronoun "he" may refer to the Old Testament Scriptures to which Paul is about to make reference, or it may refer to God who is the Author and Inspirer of all Scripture. God speaks through His work which demands attention and immediate action. The souls of men are at the mercy of God. The voices of men are apt to dull our senses and deafen us to God when He speaks. Rouse ourselves and give ear to the three summons, AWAKE, ARISE, and SHINE.

SLUMBERING SOULS

Awake thou that sleepest: Reference is possibly made not by direct question but rather by inference to Isaiah, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee (60:1, 2)"; "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that

dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead (26:19)." This may be a quotation from some unknown apocryphal book, or an early Christian hymn used in the rite of baptism or sung by a group of believers in Paul's lodging in Rome. The quotation is not exact. Probably the message deals with the need of rousing all people to acknowledge the Light, as the Jews of Isaiah's day were summoned to be true to the light possessed by them and to withdraw from heathen contacts and alliances. "Awake to righteousness and sin not, for some have not the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame (I Cor. 15:34)." "It is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light (Rom. 13:11, 12)." "Let us not sleep as do others, let us watch and be sober (I Thess. 5:6)."

God tells the sinner to awake, to rouse from slumber and be alert. As prophets roused Israel from its previous state of darkness, so the gospel calls the world to come to the light. The church is God's present voice. Every soul should receive this invitation. A trumpet blast was blown as a part of the synagogue service to call all worshippers to repentance; under the new dispensation, a gospel note is sounded to awake from ignorance, indolence, insensibility, carelessness and dreaming to consciousness of opportunity and the light in Christ Jesus. God awakens today through His word, His ministers, promptings of His Holy Spirit and His providential acts as voiced in afflictions, blessings, adversity, prosperity, sickness and death. Believers are called to rouse from sleep; believers are called to rise from spiritual death. God calls the dead and sleeping to rise, receive light from the Lord and come out of darkness to live in the light as He is in the light. The Light of Jesus like the rays of the rising sun has power to open the eyes of those who sleep. God's call comes with all the urgency of one who calls Fire! Fire! Death, loss and destruction are imminent. Arise!

Children of disobedience are told to awake from sleep, from that stupor, delusion, infatuation and insensibility which keeps them from recognizing the voice of God and walking as children of light to do the will of God. This is a call to repentance. The Ephesian church had been indifferent. Like one sleeping, it had been unable to see the things of God, to hear His voice, to speak in confession to Him and of Him, to taste and see that the Lord was good. Some of its members could see, but failed to place a proper value upon the signs of the times and the burning words of God's ambassadors. Realities appeared as dreams. At such a time, sleep is filled with danger.

Sleep is usually good, restful and necessary, but there are times when sleep may be disastrous; for example, a lookout sleeping in "the crow's nest" high up on a ship's mast, or a sentinel sleeping at his post. A Christian lives in perilous times. Much has been committed to him, if his generation or his own soul is to be saved. "Their damnation sleepeth not (II Pet. 2:3)." "Lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping (Mark 13:36)." Sleep suggests the night of death. Darkness is a symbol of Satan, error, ignorance, evil and iniquity of all forms. We are to be separate from anything which might be confused with works of darkness.

Various influences may put us to sleep. Prosperity like a full stomach may produce spiritual drowsiness; sin like the falling of the night may produce yawning and drowsiness to the work of the day or the work of God; pride, like an intoxicant, dulls the nerves and produces a stupor which makes the proud soul insensible to the warnings of the Master. "Pride goeth before destruction and an haughty spirit before a fall (Prov. 16:18)." Easy-going morals and a general laxity in Sabbath observance, church attendance, Bible reading and prayer place us in a position where sleep is apt to occur. Relaxation is an easy chair; is not conducive to vigorous thought.

What is the sleep of which we are warned? It is that state where we are willing to continue in known sin with no effort to cleanse our ways, where without self-examination or searching for truth the soul lives in a Pharisaical self-righteousness not illumined by the light of the Gospel; where apart from the Gospel and having no interest in the advance of God's

kingdom on earth, we feel independent of God's mercy and sufficient to work out our own salvation without fear and trembling; where we have become so familiar with sin and temptation and its associates that we are no longer repelled, horrified or shocked by sinful acts; where there is no open conflict with sin, but a desire to let things be as they are; where sensuality and lust dominate thought and reduce men to the plane of animals; where there is no sense of danger or heed to God's warnings. A Christian has no business to be asleep. Satan, our adversary, is constantly on the alert. Fields are white for the harvest; laborers are few. "He that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame (Prov. 10:5)." Souls are being lost for want of the truth. Christ is depending upon us; He has no other way. Awake out of sleep, indifference and insensibility. In the light of the gospel and the teachings of Jesus, look for work to be done. Rouse thy neighbor lest he lose a precious opportunity or forfeit his soul.

AWAKE TO NEW LIFE.

And arise from the dead: We have been given a rousing call from without; we are now given new life from within. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above (Col. 3:1, 2)." "Therefore we are buried with him in baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4, 5)." "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed, the night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light (Rom. 13:11, 12)." "The hour is coming when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and they that hear shall live (John 5:25)." "Even when we were dead in sins hath he quickened us together with Christ (Eph. 2:5)." "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 6:11)." These words call us to repent and turn to God; to change from a life of sin whose wage is death to a life of holiness rewarded by eternal life and inheritance of all the promises. We are to turn from the

vices of our day, from moral slumber and spiritual death to the new life of the gospel.

Turning a deaf ear to the Gospel, or becoming accustomed to the things of the world may deaden our ears and consciences to the voice of Jesus. Birds which build their nests in a belfry are said soon to become so accustomed to the pealing of the bells as to be unafraid and not even turn their heads to the sounds which once frightened them. Those who live near the roar of Niagara become so used to its sound as to be unaware of its presence. Sin may be so much with us as to make us unconscious of the voice of Jesus. The light shines upon us. Like those of Christ's time, do we ignore its presence? How simple Jesus has made it, "Ask and ye shall receive. Look unto me and be ye saved." None but those dead in trespass and sin could possibly overlook such offers for mercy, pardon and salvation.

He who said, "I am the resurrection and the life," calls us to awake to new life. Just as He bade Lazarus come forth, Jesus commands us to stand out from the state of powerlessness, inability and decay which sin imposes. The light of the Gospel has power to awaken the spiritually dead who have no signs of spiritual vitality and are cut off from the favor of God. Night, shame and moral corruption have so long surrounded them, they have become children of the night and children of disobedience.

THE LIGHT OF LIFE.

And Christ: The Son of God was known as the Light of the world. John begins his Gospel with an account of the world's reception of Him. In Him is light; darkness is past; we are invited to turn as flowers toward the light and have all the beautiful shades of Christian virtue appearing in us. It takes the warmth and brilliance of light to produce fragrance. Dampness cannot develop sweetness. Jesus is the true light, the source of all light, the dayspring from on high and the light to lighten the Gentiles. "In him is no darkness at all." He is a "light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death (Luke 1:79)." "In him was life and the life was the light of men (John 1:4)." "Then spake Jesus again unto

them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life (John 8:12)." "As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world (John 9:5)." Isaiah spoke of that light. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined (Isa. 9:2)."

OUR MESSAGE TO A WORLD OF DARKNESS.

Shall give thee light: Christ gives us His light. No other light will be adequate. Not the light of experience, the light of history, reason, the heart, the understanding, friends, philosophy, or the conscience, but the light of the Christ and the radiance of the Cross. "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin (I John 1:7)." "He that saith he is in the light and hateth his own brother is in darkness even until now (I John 2:9)." "Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness, thy whole body shall be full of light (Luke 11:35, 36)." "Ye are the light of the world. Let your light so shine before men that seeing your good works, they may glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matt. 5:14-16)."

The light God sheds upon our path is not for selfish enjoyment. Neh. 9:12 tells of the pillar of fire by night which guided the children of Israel through the wilderness. Their children were to enter the promised land instead of themselves who had disobeyed God. Our light is to guide both us and our neighbor. "The Lord give thee for a light to the Gentiles (Isa. 42:6)." Light (I Cor. 4:4-6; 3:18) changes us from glory to glory. Light effects a spiritual transformation following our awakening and arising. Forsaking trust in self and our neighbor, we trust Him to lift us up. We are kept in the light by keeping in touch with Him and in constant union with His Spirit. Living in association with the light and having the light shine from our hearts brings us the luminance of Christ Himself. We also shine. The rising and setting sun makes panes of glass appear to be sheets of flame. Christ brings us the glory of the only begotten Son of God to be reflected.

Forever, God has been sending light. Light was His first creation. "Let there be light." The Gospel of the new dispensation brings light on all mysteries and problems. Light needs no voice or bell to announce its coming; it shines and mists vanish and darkness flees. Gospel truth sends sin scurrying into darkness. Light is given to brighten the way, reveal pitfalls, and show us the end of our journey. Jesus did all this for us and waits to do more if we will let Him. Light shines in the day so man may work. Jesus said, "I must do the work of him that sent me while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work." The Christian has work to do. Life is a task. We are to follow His pattern. Let us do the will of God while we have youth, unimpaired talents and vision of the truth. If any choose to live in hovels and shut out the light of day, they can blame themselves. The sun shines on. Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever, waiting to give of Himself, to glorify and illumine. If your contact with Him is broken, renew it. Let us not sleep as do others. Let us watch and be sober. "Come ye and let us walk in the light of the Lord (Isa. 2:5)." Is He our light? Are we enlightened to walk as children of the light? Are we shining in our world? He gives us light, as an ancient manuscript translates "by shining upon us, by touching our life with His life." Only Christ's presence can keep darkness out of your life.

XV.

WALK CIRCUMSPECTLY

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise."

—EPH. 5:15.

TAKE CARE.

See that ye walk circumspectly: Christ is the light of the world; a light which not only shines itself but also gives light to others that they might shine. The sun gives of itself and the earth, planets and stars glow because of it. Light on the earth is life and health to the vegetable and animal kingdom. The light of Jesus is life and health to all believers. Those who live in sin are in great darkness. The Christian is to let his light shine. He is a light bearer to light others to the Cross from which all radiance emanates. Is your light burning brightly as a lamp bearer? do the winds of temptation cause your light to flicker uncertainly? are you holding your light high enough for its beams to spread to the furthest possible point? Others are depending upon us for their salvation. The proof of our faith and the call to their unbelief is our Savior's work in saving and bringing us the happiness of a life lost in Him. Unless we recommend our Lord, many will drift hopelessly further and further towards destruction. Regardless of what others may be doing, or what they will be satisfied in seeing you do, regardless of a laxity in the church or the spirit of the times, see that your light is creditable and pleasing to the Giver of the Light of lights. Watch that light with your life. Do not let it go out whatever happens. The eternal destiny of some soul depends upon you. Do not blame God, the church or the pastor if your light is not burning well. It is your fault. God saves completely from sin. He is able to keep from sin.

A word of caution is also in these words. Walk carefully. Be sure your sins will find you out. That which is done in

secret will come to light. If it is a discredit to your Master, it will hinder the work of the gospel. The act which appears to be unobserved will some day be proclaimed from the house-tops. A careless word, an evil impulse, a hasty act, and a satisfied longing, may linger a bitter memory throughout life. A slip of a second may fracture a hip and leave permanent disability. An answered temptation scars the soul, damages reputation, estranges friends, and frequently separates one in the depths of remorse from God. How great are the responsibilities and consequences of a single minute.

Let life be carefully planned and governed. Look carefully how time be spent. Years on earth are few at best. Eternity hangs in the balance. Random living is like flying the Atlantic without lifeboat, preserver, food or compass and just enough gas to get there. Make allowances for storms, fog, ice, winds, drift, breakage, and hidden imperfections. The ocean bottom marks the grave of those who smilingly say, "Farewell, we will take a chance with death." Death won. Religion is for the smallest details of life. Every step of our way needs Christ. When we leave Christ, Satan keeps step with us.

The walk of the believer is circumspect, exact, punctilious, intelligent, exact. Each step is strictly by rule. He can afford no detours or wasted moments. As an ambassador of the heavenly King, a message of salvation must be delivered to a lost world. The course of a Christian is like the route of an aviator going from San Francisco to Hawaii. The destination is but a pin-point in space. A thousand and one hazards need to be overcome. Deviation by a hair's breadth must be avoided or great will be the separation at the journey's end. Angles begin close together but never meet even in infinity. A soul given to the Lord starts to heaven. Each step towards heaven is a greater distance from hell. Each step downward makes it harder to journey upward and find salvation. Passing years leave a hardness, irresolution and careless disdain. Give yourself to the Lord while life is in the beginning. Come to the Lord now. Just now your doubtings give over; just now give yourself to Jesus.

Our walk must be in the light. We are to walk as He is in the light because the days are evil. We live in an unregen-

erate world. Sin leaves its stain. We cleanse our teeth twice a day to prevent decay; we cleanse our faces and hands before eating to prevent germs from bringing disease; what are we doing to cleanse our souls from the stain of sin? How is our life different from that of the world? Five times Paul stresses the need of walking as those who had heard of Christ and living for Christ. The world is asking, as the damsel asked Peter, "Are you not one of His?" Why therefore this attitude, language, unforgiving spirit, selfishness, indifference, lustful yearning and this inactivity? Walk. Get started. The time for recreation and rest is over. Walk circumspectly. 1, Walk worthy of the high calling of Christ Jesus your Lord. 2, No longer walk as the Gentiles walked and as you did before the gospel was preached to you. In the words of Sam Jones, "Quit your meanness." 3, Walk in love, and affection for sinners, distinguishing between the sinner and his sin. Hate the wrong, but love the one who has fallen. The sinner is used to curses and kicks. Kindness and genuine love will transform him and melt his heart. 4, Walk as children of light. You do not expect a piece of mud to glow, but you do expect a lamp to shine. 5, Walk as wise men, redeeming the time for the days are evil. A sailor is known by his lumbering step. The roll and pitch of the deck seems to follow him on land. A disciple is known by his step.

IN DARKNESS.

Not as unwise: To be deceived by evil and its deceits is the height of folly. Christ has pointed out the hazards. Red lanterns hang all along the road. Fences and stop signs have been placed. The curves have their danger reflectors. To ignore these warnings and to drive at breakneck speed is the height of folly. When a bottle has been marked poison and has been blown into a different shape from other medical containers to prevent mistakes, a person has no excuse to deliberately or absent-mindedly take poison. Jesus unmasked Satan as a wolf in sheep's clothing. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging. Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth." Pride goeth before destruction." The Bible is full of danger-signs. Walk therefore with wisdom. Profit by all that Jesus through His Book, His church and the voice of con-

science is waiting to tell you. How foolish is the man who carries a filled, perfect lantern and matches in his pocket, yet walks in darkness. A closed Bible and prayerless life is like an unlighted lantern. What folly to walk in darkness when pitfalls and an unknown path lie ahead.

Walk not as unwise. Your failure to live up to the teachings of Jesus may be interpreted by onlookers as meaning you cannot be kept from certain sins. They may view your failure as being Christ's failure. Every reborn believer is an added argument for the saving power of Jesus. The proof of the practical value of an aeroplane is its ability to fly and carry loads under difficult circumstances. No amount of theory, no number of beautifully worked drawings can equal the value of one sustained, governed flight and safe, happy landing. You and I are Jesus' arguments. The twelve apostles have told their story. Paul's message is history. Your message and mine is Jesus' voice today. All that He did through the disciples of the first century He will do through you. Walk close to Jesus and present no obstacles to the church by your loud praying and poor practice. Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. Some versions translate wise "fools." That word is being softened by many. It grates upon our nerves. We see red when called fools. It insults; no compliment can be squeezed from it; no comfort obtained from its implications. We want to get away from the bitter. Pills must be sugar-coated. Castor oil must be tasteless and odorless. We are afraid of offending, so try to get away from using the words "hell," "punishment" and "fools." A fool is unwise, but we halt when we are called fools. The jar brings us to our senses. Jesus used the word "fool" to bring people to their senses. It was His way of saying "Wake up, my friend." Awake, thou that sleepest! A cataract is below; rushing waters and powerful, silent swift currents are about you. Pull for the shore! Take Jesus now as your Lord and Master.

WALK IN LIGHT

But as wise: Walk as a Christian. You were Gentiles; now in Christ you are Christians. Your daily life should reflect what you have learned from the Divine Teacher. Walk with

eyes open to the dangers of living in sin and yielding to temptation. Be not like the foolish virgins who fell asleep while waiting for signs of His coming. We are 1937 years nearer the time of His coming than was John the Beloved. Be patient. In due season ye shall reap if ye faint not. Be not weary in well doing. Exhibit your wisdom by avoiding those surroundings where you are susceptible to temptation. Many an emigrant has come to America to get a new start and get away from vicious surroundings. Come to Jesus to be free from the oppression of sin. Walk with exactness. Have a reason for the faith which is in you. Others take life blindly. We must be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect. This is our task. Not daring to trust ourselves in certain situations, we separate ourselves from danger; we burn bridges behind us lest we be tempted to retreat.

We walk as wise by taking a forward step and praying for light for the next step. Miss no opportunity to do the will of God. As sons of God and future citizens of a heavenly kingdom we must advance while it is yet day, working out our own salvation with fear and trembling. Evil is about us. We are like escaped prisoners swimming the waters between Morro Castle prison and the shore of Havana. Man-eating sharks swim unseen; death seems to lurk in every stroke; yet to make the shore is life and security. Each safe stroke brings the swimmer closer to safety. Each day lived with Christ draws heaven closer and proves the wisdom of choosing Him to be Captain of our life.

Wisdom consists in making no compromise with sin. Confident of safety, Daniel stroked the heads of man-eating lions; his God was able; why should he fear the laws of the Medes and Persians, and the decree of the King? We know Satan will be vanquished, for God survives the wrecks of time. Truth will be vindicated in her children. Prayer will be answered. Faith will be rewarded. Our souls are committed to God through Christ. Take courage.

We prove our wisdom by saving ourselves, also by throwing out the lifeline. When the steamship Morro Castle burned off the Jersey coast, just censure was brought against members of the crew who violated the laws of the sea by ignoring passengers to save themselves. Christianity is not every man for

himself; it is unselfish service. Others is our watchword. The servant is not greater than his Lord. Seek and save those who are lost.

The Greek word "circumspectly" means "carefully." Before you put your foot on the trail look for snares, snakes and traps covered to deceive. Satan is working for your soul. Will he be successful in obtaining it? Take care of every footfall. Go gently. Look about you. Advance, but make haste slowly. This carefulness in conduct can be practiced in business—take no unfair advantage. Do not strike when a person is down. Follow the Golden Rule. Christ can help you build business by honest practices, full measures and fairness to employees. Trickery, deceit, adulterations and selfishness reap their certain harvest. Wisdom is also found in speech. First thoughts on the tip of the tongue are not always best. Pray that words may be according to His will, then speak. Paul was bold in speech because he spoke for God. Francis de Sales gives this rule, "Let your conversation be little but good, little but amiable, little but sweet, little but simple, little but affectionate." A pupil of Alice Freeman Palmer said of her, "She has a way of making you feel all dipped in sunshine."

This proof of wisdom is seen in our daily conduct. Mrs. Palmer used to tell her students who wished to know the secret of a lovely life, "Commit to memory, every day, something good. Look for something pretty every day. Do something for somebody every day—you must promise to keep these rules continually for they will not work if you skip a single day." In other words, regular constant exercise begets godliness. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. The proof of Christianity is in the living. "Walk therefore as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil."

XVI.

MAKING THE MOST OF OPPORTUNITY

"Redeeming the time because the days are evil."

—EPH. 5:16.

SUSTAINED GOODNESS.

Redeeming the time: The Christian is to be like a merchant visiting many markets to seek goodly pearls and spending every moment searching the best and discarding the poor. Each stall is given careful inspection; every rumor is traced in search of perfect pearls; each pearl is minutely examined with the eye of an expert to detect flaws and discover real values. Days are added unto days in this ceaseless conquest for treasure. Time is a treasure. The wise of all time have always considered minutes of great value. To the Greeks, time was charged with opportunity to be vitalized with energy and transformed into purposeful activity. A Persian gave three things which never returned, "A spent arrow, a spoken word, a lost opportunity." The African, even in his jungle life and lethargy, noted "Dawn does not come twice to waken man."

Opportunity must be prepared for and waited for if it is to be grasped and utilized. How many weary, careful months are given by the astronomer in calculation, inspection of instruments, journeying to points of advantage, perfecting equipment, and being at a high point of personal efficiency to utilize the brief moments of an eclipse for the furthering of science. Shall the Christian who has the destiny of a soul hanging in the balance be less careful? How many leaders of meetings come to the zero hour unprepared! How many face the crisis of their life without any preparation of the soul! How many come to the door of death itself with no lifetime of preparation for this passing before the judgment seat of God!

The world, the church and every organization is full of

those who bewail their sad fate. Others have risen, advanced or found opportunity, but they have been outcast, cheated, neglected, overlooked, submerged and ignored. The person does not live to whom opportunity does not knock at some time. Christ knocks at the door of every soul each hour of life to offer forgiveness of sins, a clean heart, loving consideration and complete salvation. Until Jesus has been accepted and a soul has received these gifts from Him, no opportunity will be worth much. Our health, wealth, friends, loved ones, ambitions, creations and business all are left behind when we journey into eternity. We learn from the lips and heart of the Master the real value of time and its use in the perfecting of ourselves and the calling of others to follow and surrender to the Savior. No one can properly use time who does not realize its value. Here is a college student—doting parents pay for tuition and dormitory fees, give introductions, and leave no stone unturned to make college life a valuable and pleasant experience. The student slips through classes, lives joyously far into the night, and thinks of every possible subject other than the courses being taken. Present opportunity is being lost. The existence of churches, Bibles, tracts and living believers give a vast portion of the world an opportunity of being saved. But time must be redeemed.

Four possible ways may be given to redeem time:

1. Take every possible occasion to fulfill duty. Ask each day and hour, "What can I do to give value to this moment?"
2. Acquire time by purchase from evil and unappreciative hands. Satan is striving to induce us to spend hours with him. Jesus also claims these same pearls.
3. Make use of and improve every occasion for doing good. "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time (Col. 4:5)."
4. Make the best possible use of every moment, rescuing from waste or abuse time and effort which may win a soul for Christ. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good to all men, especially unto those of the household of faith (Gal. 6:10)."

The third and fourth are possibly in the mind of Paul. There is no time to lose. No man knows the hour of his calling. Accidents, mishaps, changed circumstances, readiness

and willingness—all pass. Those susceptible harden into indifference. The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God (I Cor. 2:6-14). If we have wasted yesterday, redeem today.

Casual thought and recollection will bring a flock of ways in which we have been losing opportunities. Think of time wasted in cards, in valueless observance of or following sports. How many wasted hours are spent in grills, theaters and dancing far towards the dawn. The world is full of those who seem to have no special place or purpose in God's great world. Their moral emptiness and vacuity in living give an utter fruitlessness to their lives. One such who was asked as death drew near, "Are you afraid to die?" replied, "No, not afraid—ashamed." Precious years and opportunities have been ignored, talents have been buried, ability has earned no increase. Like the thief on the cross, a seeking and earnest faith was the only credential to heaven. Wasted years might have brought a bit of heaven into life and this might have been shared with others. Gladstone felt life to be a "grand and noble calling." Working hours needed to be sanctified and ennobled with the Holy Spirit of God, or priceless marble would be a mass of chips from which no masterpiece of art could rise.

Redeem the time. Our forefathers had no such leisure on their hands as we. Shorter hours of labor; quicker transportation to and from work; the electric light which turns night into day; books and schools, the massing of population into cities; the lessening of drudgery and backbreaking toil by the use of machinery and mass output—what use is being made of all this time? Is more gospel seed being sown? Are more being born into the kingdom of God? Do we find fewer sowing wild oats? Do parents bring up their children with a more godly fear? Are the churches overcrowded? Do church members stand and with righteous indignation protest against unrighteousness, graft and corruption in all its forms in the halls of justice and through the press? Redeem the time. Is the Lord's day being redeemed? Until we redeem the Sabbath how can we be expected to redeem week days? A moral wilderness surrounds us. A lot of clearing and uprooting must be done. Sin is crowding out good. The Sab-

bath is the foundation of our civilization. Destroy this and kingdoms fall. The Sabbath was ordained and set apart by command of God. When the hours of His day have become too precious for purely worldly pursuits, the tide will begin to turn.

Redeem the time in reading. It is good to see a swing towards the best literature. Much time is lost upon silly, sentimental mush, or hair-raising, thrilling adventure tales of the most impossible type. Detective stories have a relaxing quality if temperately followed. But for reading which contains all forms of literature, from the humorous to the love story; a book which inspires, challenges, corrects, prepares and saves—give me the Bible. When most familiar, it is least known; when mysterious, suddenly it reveals itself! no other book tells so much about God, heaven, the soul, death, immortality, the beginning and end of the world, the origin and possibility of man and the laws of the universe. First things are put first. To redeem the time and get more value for a minute, read God's Holy Book.

SIN CONFUSES,

Because the days are evil: One reason for carefully selecting that wisest use of time which will cause each minute to be used to its utmost capacity is that, then as now, days are physically evil. "Few and evil have the days and years of my life been (Gen. 47:9) and morally evil, for sin abounds in "an evil and adulterous generation (Matt. 12:39)" for which Christ "gave himself for our sins (Gal. 1:4) that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." This "present evil world" would cause the Christian to work constantly. Weeds grow quickly in a neglected garden. Sin abounds, but grace does much more abound.

Life is frequently lived in too much of a hurry. The result is laxity in morals, aimlessness in effort, carelessness in religious habits, unsystematic giving and unwise spending, fruitless investments, unpreparedness for the days of adversity, loss of our souls and emptiness in Christian experience. To be at its fullest, life needs concentration and purpose. This is true in all forms of physical and mental activity. The runner has a goal, the worker has a pattern, the sales manager

has a quota, the writer has a plan, the Christian has his purpose. Eyes must be kept upon the mark. The disciple of Jesus fixes his eye upon the mark of the high calling in Christ Jesus and because friends and inclinations are so alluring, because Satan and his hosts are seeking to frustrate God's purposes, he keeps himself alert, steady and constantly aware of the value of the task given. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." We have the privilege of taking the gospel message of salvation to a despairing soul; we may also lose our own soul. Take a straight course and avoid detours and bypaths.

"Evil days call for wise walking," says McPherson. "They allow no time for vain words or unfruitful works, they make it imperiously necessary that churches look accurately to their work. The danger of Christians in times of abounding wickedness, against which they must guard themselves by vigorous occupation, is that their love to God and Christ should never grow cold." Paul could see evil hanging like a dark cloud all about him. These were the signs before a storm. Four years after the writing of this letter Peter and Paul were martyrs. Jerusalem was soon captured and the great temple was in ruins. Today the handwriting is on the wall. The church is forgetting its message of redemption. A social gospel is being exchanged for a gospel of salvation. Family worship is not only omitted, but church members do not want to think or talk about it. With increasing leisure there is still no time or convenient period when all the family may worship together for a quiet moment with God. The family is fed, warmed and clothed, but the Bread of Life cannot be broken. Is it that we have become "too reckless to think and too impatient to learn?" These are critical days for all of us. We dare not go forward without an adequate knowledge of God's plan for us and a freshened certainty of what God calls *sin*. The present day lives in its frequent statement that the Bible is mistaken as to the nature and effects of sin. Eve was deceived. Wine is still a mocker. Satan comes in sheep's clothing. A poisonous flower frequently has an alluring fragrance. The serpent bewitches its victim. "Take heed that no man

deceive you (Matt. 24:4).” The urgency of the times demands close fellowship with Jesus. His eyes pierce the deceitful heart. Walk with Jesus and all will be well. Away with pride, self, and spiritual advice from unchristian friends. “For me to live is Christ.” So shall I arrive safely at my haven of rest.

XVII.

TRUE WISDOM

"Wherefore be ye not foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is." —EPH. 5:17.

WISDOM NECESSARY.

Wherefore: The days are evil. We will be tempted to place a low value upon time and improperly redeem it. Time is a precious commodity. At best, too short a time is given us to do the work of extending God's kingdom upon earth. Let us walk as wise men and utilize to the fullest extent the years which are ours.

KNOW THE WILL OF GOD

Be ye not foolish: Folly is lack of understanding and wisdom. No wise man can afford to act foolishly. He must learn to properly weigh and estimate causes and effects, to develop long vision and consider momentary pleasure and comfort from the viewpoint of eternity. Folly can be illustrated by the man who, because it is handy, uses a Swiss watch to pound nails. The mind is one of the greatest pieces of God's creative genius. To use it carelessly or act unwisely is the height of folly. Folly consists in placing a wrong interpretation upon the importance of events, and seeing the apparent triumph of evil and seeming futility of good. It is foolish to desert God with no further investigation and no searching of the scripture for guidance. It is folly to draw the conclusion that honesty, virtue and godliness does not pay, and shift to the camp of Satan. This trifling, senseless and unthinking display of grey matter leads into difficulties, trials and sorrows. The inexperience of a child leads it into all sorts of predicaments. The child has not had opportunity to develop reasoning ability and draw conclusions. But you expect more from an adult, especially one who has made a

confession of faith by uniting with the church. Though life has taught all to be on the alert against adulteration, false weights, wrong labels and misrepresentation, how careless and indifferent we are in the matter of our souls, and how readily the world is given first place. "But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast prepared (Luke 12:20)." "And the world passeth away and the lusts thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever (I John 2:17)." The only way to prevent folly is to follow the example of Christ in all matters. When in doubt see what He did, hear what He said, and delve into His thoughts. When tempted to place too much stress upon things of the body see the importance He places upon the affairs of the soul; when exhausted with toil, worry and care, find the secret of His renewing and His ability to face the task of the day with sweetness, courage and faith in the ultimate triumph of His kingdom. Christians should not be foolish. Though the way be hard, press on and turn not to the camp of deserters. "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done (Luke 22:42)." When tempted to make a god out of gold, first bring a tithe to the altar. When in doubt concerning immortality and the life after death and tempted to say with others, "eat, drink and be merry," read I Cor. 15:36, "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die." Be not classed among those "Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth (II Tim. 3:7)."

A WORTHY INTELLECT.

But understand: We are to exercise critical faculties and after we have made a thorough investigation be able to arrive at certain right conclusions. Jesus invites inspection. No Christian well grounded in truth need ever be afraid of the truth. His Bible will stand critical research. True science cannot tear the Bible apart. It may shed light upon it, but not destroy faith in God or the power of God. God made the laws of science; will He destroy Himself? God was the Beginning. The Bible enables us to wisely and understandingly "discriminate between the true and false, right and wrong, im-

portant and unimportant." A wise man will inevitably decide to live for Christ, eagerly listen to His voice and suggestion, promptly obey His commands, and gladly follow all the way even though it involves taking up a cross.

Understanding comes with maturity and experience. We come to Christ believing Him to be all that He claims to be. We follow to find Him fulfilling all His claims. How little the Twelve know when they were asked to forsake all and follow. Three short years taught them much. The difference between disciple and an apostle was largely in the distance between them and their Lord. The apostles were in the inner circle of understanding; their lives were moulded and influenced by Jesus; what He preached they practiced to the best of their ability; they knew the mind and will of the Lord for their generation more perfectly than their contemporaries; they were uncertain on many points; they were not at the tomb when the stone was rolled away, some of them having returned to former occupations and homes. We do not have to know the why's and the what's of everything to be sure of God. A child takes a parent at his word. Why cannot the children of a Heavenly Father take Him at His word with the same trust expected of earthly children? We know our will for our children is best. God knows His will is best for us. Only by surrendering completely to His personality and pleasure can we hope to find happiness for ourselves in all things.

The student who doubts the teacher never becomes a great scholar. First must come an acknowledgment of ignorance and a willingness to be taught, and then concentrated study and absorption of knowledge which leads to understanding. So with the truth of the gospel. We can know God, understand God, talk to God, walk with God, commune with God, but renunciation of self is the price to be paid. God made us with a capacity for enjoying Him forever. Are we? Have we? Do we wish to have this satisfying joy? We must talk to God as Moses communed with Him to enjoy Him. Listen to God speak and the Spirit will guide you to an understanding of His words. Doctors in the temple became so absorbed with the wisdom of the boy Jesus that they forgot their duty to help locate distressed parents. Many mysteries of the prophecies and the future establishment of God's kingdom were being re-

vealed from the lips of this boy. Many a parent has been led into the kingdom of God by a child.

"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind (Rom. 12:2)." Rebirth is the beginning of enlightenment. "If any will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself (John 7:17)." "And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done (Acts 21:14)." At times understanding comes from direct revelation and not from scholastic absorption. Blinded Paul, when led into the presence of Ananias, was greeted with these words, "The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will (Acts 22:14)."

A DIVINE PLAN.

What the will: It is well to remind ourselves that God not only has a plan for the ages, but also a plan for our life. The sooner we recognize this fact the better it will be for all of us. Get God's viewpoint of suffering, temptation, sorrow, loss, ill-health, reverses, patience, resignation, peace and joy. We can count it a blessing to be chastened of the Lord, "for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." The will of the Lord is more important than the will of man. To please God is better than to please man. Find out "what is good perfect and acceptable will of God" and all will be well, for as we test and prove His will, it will bring good in our life. Testing God's promises is seldom easy. Steel passes through fire and many rollings before it reaches highest value. Our soul requires much refining.

In both the Old Testament and the New, the will of God is to redeem man. It is not His will that any sinner should perish. Christ died and sacrificed His life upon the Cross that we might have our sins washed away and be pardoned. This fact led Paul to be under the law to Christ, and give himself wholly to Him (I Cor. 9:21). "In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you (I Thess. 5:18)." If we are in the hands of Christ let us abide easily and restfully. "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God (Rom. 12:2)." "For this is the will of God,

even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication (I Thess. 4:3)." Epaphras prayed that "we may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." We are to be "filled with knowledge of His will and all wisdom and spiritual understanding." A contribution was sent to the poor in Jerusalem because believers in other localities had "given themselves to the Lord" and unto the children of God by the will of God (II Cor. 8:5).

GOD'S WILL CAN BE KNOWN.

Of the Lord is: His will is all important. It alone must be the rule of faith and practice. The Lord is the Redeemer of mankind. Jesus our Lord enters into the daily life of every believer. We must follow the example of our Lord. "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work (John 4:34)."

To discover what the will of the Lord is we must (Matt. 6:10) seek light frequently in the privacy of our thoughts on bended knee. Jesus often visited the garden of Gethsemane when in the neighborhood of Jerusalem. Christ needed a place of retirement. President Lincoln always allowed a half-hour for communion with his God before he dared to face the appointments of the day. Let us be seen doing His will. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven (Matt. 7:21)." "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and my sister and my mother (Mark 3:35)." The Christian is to know and do the will of God in all things, at all times, in all possible ways, to all possible people, everywhere, under all circumstances.

XVIII.

THE TRUE SOURCE OF INSPIRATION

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."
—EPH. 5:18.

PROHIBITION.

And be not drunk with wine: The Christian has been urged to conduct himself wisely instead of foolishly; to redeem the time in consideration of life and its purpose; to understand what the will of God is for the individual. Now this command is added, be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit.

Some were confused between the effects of excessive wine drinking and the apparent results of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Interested observers thought Pentecostal power to be the exhilaration of new wine. For this reason, many of the apostles abstained from all wine, lest some be confused and believe the voice of God speaking from within might be the result of imbibing wine. Their demonstration of the Spirit's presence and influence must be correctly understood.

The warning against drunkenness was not new. Old and New Testaments contain many unmistakable condemnations of the practice. Solomon is very specific in mentioning the danger from indulgence. "Take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be overcharged with drunkenness (Luke 21:34)." "Let us walk honestly, as in the day—not in drunkenness (Rom. 13:13)." Paul warns us (I Cor. 5:11) not to keep company with drunkards—lest we be like them, while I Cor. 6:10 leaves no escape—"nor drunkards shall inherit the kingdom of God." In Gal. 5:19-21, drunkenness is classed with the foulest of vices and works of the flesh—"adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, murders." What company! Drink is a vice which opens the door to a host of other evils.

Beginning with various excuses it betrays, enslaves, impoverishes and ruins the soul which yields to its offer of excitement, oblivion, fellowship or happiness. The drunkard becomes senseless to the finer things of life; moral and spiritual values lose their proper perspectives; the body and mind no longer fulfill their intended uses. The moral sense is dulled and stupefied; God can no longer be seen or followed. How varied are the allurements of drink; the idle hope to employ time which lies heavily upon them; the weary seek stimulation of depleted energies; the young crave excitement and thrills; the aged wish oblivion; the ignorant have no power of self-restraint, the social disposition hopes to find happiness, freedom and new interests.

While Paul speaks only of being drunk with wine, he might also have included that abandon and intoxication which comes from following intemperate ends, the lust for gold, the hunger for power, the spirit of wanderlust, the desire for social prestige, the practice of gambling in all its various forms, unbalanced recreation, overindulgence in moving pictures and desire to win at cards at any cost. Abandon to the demands of these various interests give feverish desires and morbid cravings, the depths of despondency and the exhilaration of winnings which fail to meet the demands of God.

SIN OPENS MANY DOORS.

Wherein is excess: The act of intoxication or being under the complete influence of wine leads to excess and woe. "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them (Isa. 5:11)." This excess leads to destruction. Chrysostom declares that "drunkenness not only does not preserve, but destroys." Revelry, debauchery, dissoluteness, riot, self-destruction, unrestrained conduct, unbounded desires and reckless extravagance are the product of wine. The cup destroys all bounds of duty, defies all efforts to reform and leads the user into quicksands of remorse. Proud and vain thoughts and exaggerated ideas of self-importance exclude the ability to reason, and exercise self-restraint and self-control. Strong drink heats the blood, quickens the pulse and fires the passions

to seek satisfaction in sensual indulgencies, gambling and immoral literature and art. At least, "it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder (Prov. 23:32)." Body, mind, soul, home, family, reputation and prospects are sacrificed. Right gradually becomes powerless to influence, good resolutions and principles of conduct no longer have audience, prayer is crowded out, companions are of an indifferent sort, shabbiness of dress, carelessness in all things, an anemic conscience and a powerless will describe the drunkard. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise (Prov. 20:1)."

Who can read I Pet. 4:3, 4 and wish to travel in such company or wish any members of their families to live in such an atmosphere? The unfortunate thing about drink is that he who thinks himself capable of control soon finds himself enslaved like others. The natural channel through which the spirit should pass is choked; money is wasted for that which does not profit and is unavailable for real necessities of life; body and mind are made unfit for the service of God; the family is defrauded of ordinary necessities of life; creditors are cheated of their just dues; God's bounty is squandered; man sinks to the level of a brute; satisfaction of the craving of drink opens the door for the entrance of lust, passion, insolence, profanity, obstinacy and folly. Alexander the Great once offered a prize to the one who, in a competition, could drink the most. Thirty of the contestants died.

What good can be spoken for the habit of indulgence in drink? How many homes are wrecked, how many sink to lower levels of companionship and society; how quickly slums are created and families move to cheaper rents; how soon the church dies—suffering loss of support, interest and presence; time is wasted; money needed for family expenses is gambled or poured into a throat which always thirsts or into the empty throats waiting for their turn at being treated; noise, combativeness, confusion, dullness, weakness, unsteadiness of hand, heart and mind results; "who hath contentions; who hath babbling; who has wounds without cause? They that tarry long at the wine."

The excess to which wine leads is a sin. The temple of the Holy Ghost is desecrated and made unfit for the mission

and work for which it was intended; others suffer needless unkindness, poverty, abuse, fear, trembling, hatred, want, disease, anxiety and forebodings. The work of doing the will of God is never made easier. Life is so short. Decision to live for Him comes so late. Real efficiency in service requires so lengthy a preparation, death comes so soon, we must needs leave no stone unturned to give Christ, who died for us, the maximum part of our life. Drink does not increase the circle of those with whom we can do personal work. I doubt if a personal worker ever saved a soul after partaking a social glass of wine. The Scripture does not justify drink. Paul governed his life by the principle that if meat caused his brother to offend he would eat no meat. As one man expressed it, "what does it matter a hundred years from now whether you have taken a drink or not?" To be sure of eternity is of far more consequence than enjoying a passing pleasure. To have the friendship of Christ is more valuable than to be introduced into any circle of earthly friends.

THE ANTIDOTE.

But be filled: Wine is a temporary inward stimulus. The Holy Spirit is an outward permanent uplift. One is a sin, the other brings salvation; one depresses, the other exalts; the mind cannot be void. We choose spirits or The Spirit. The contrast is between a noisy, coarse and vulgar group and a quiet, helpful circle, singing with melody in their hearts. Instead of being filled with wine which satisfies only for the moment, be continually filled with the Spirit in fulfillment of His promises. Give Him full place, be controlled not by intoxication, but be impelled by this promised Comforter to do His will at all times. Every Christian is to be perfected in His will, and to be rounded out in word, thought, feelings, attitudes and deeds. We can be fit for the Master's service only by being filled with the Spirit and emptying ourselves of everything else. We are to be filled with the Spirit as a sponge saturated with water. This filling cannot be done by ourselves. It does not come by reasoning or training. It flows from God. "Ye are complete in him (Col. 2:10)." It is said of Barnabas that "he was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith (Acts 11:24)." This fullness of

the Spirit supplies all our wants, and brings the realization of our expectations, when we pray, mean and live "not my will but Thine be done, O Lord."

This fullness is a constant reality. We are not overflowing today and empty tomorrow. There is no drought in the life of a Christian unless he is the cause of it. When man does his part, God does His. A great unmeasurable, fathomless, everlasting fountain of living waters is waiting to flow in quantity sufficient for all our needs. We open the flood gates. God can bring the Holy Spirit and the water of life to the very door of our heart, but no further until we open our heart to Him. Emphasis should be made upon the necessity of emptying our life of worldliness. Good and evil, being mutually exclusive, cannot occupy the same place at the same time. Rubbish and gold cannot simultaneously fill a vessel. By the grace of God we have our sins forgiven to substitute virtues for our vices. The Christian life is never an empty life. Some make the mistake of trying to keep both good and evil in their life. They are afraid of being out and out for Christ. We are to come out from among them, to stand apart, to be lights set on a hill. A lamp half filled with oil is not very dependable. At the crucial moment it may go out.

GRACE EXPELS VICE.

With the Spirit: The article "the" is important. There is only one Holy Spirit. It cannot be confused with the effects of fermented wine. The Holy Spirit is both the instrument of our filling and that with which we are filled; it inspires, stimulates, and brings joy and strength. The Spirit has been called our Guide, our Comforter and our Sanctifier. It is God's gift to His established church. Christ was filled with the Holy Ghost (Luke 4:1). Stephen was "full of faith and the Holy Ghost (Acts 6:5)." When we are filled with the Spirit we will be full of everything just, true, lovely, of good report, virtue and praise. By possessing it we will have received what Christ promised when He told His despondent disciples, "I will not leave you comfortless." Those enjoying the fellowship, privileges, strength and vision of the Spirit have a counter-stimulant to sin and enter into a new order of fellowship denied those who follow the cup. A sense of com-

radeship exists among those waiting for the coming of the Lord and those being instruments of blessing which does not exist among the habitudes of the grill, saloon or the social club. The gaiety of the Holy Spirit never goes out of control, it does not impoverish the user, it brings no grief or regret. Its possession does not deprive others of their legal, or moral rights. The Spirit-filled home is a happy home. The motto, "God Bless Our Home" can be fulfilled when father, mother, children, boarders and roomers all seek the gift of the Spirit, until they find it and possess it.

Wine is the spirit of the world; the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God and of Christ. Our heart must be filled with something, and both Satan and God can find something for idle hands to do. But how different are the ends of life! What shall the harvest be in *your* life? It does not pay to take chances with our lives. The Bible never makes mistakes. God places a high value upon every soul. It is not His will that one be lost for doubt as to the way to save a soul for eternity. His commands are clear, direct and conclusive. "Be not—but be." Our lives are to be filled. We all want a full life. How madly some go about to fill their lives! Our life is to be filled with the Spirit. The Spirit will guide us to real values in life, will help us attain them and will keep them for us throughout all eternity. As an evidence of the Spirit's presence we will speak to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs; we will sing and make melody in our hearts to the Lord; we will give thanks at all times, for all things, to God our Father, in the name of Jesus Christ.

XIX.

A SINGING HEART

"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord."

—EPH. 5:19.

FELLOWSHIP WITH EACH OTHER.

Speaking to yourselves: We contrast here the ribald songs of those under the influence of wine and the spiritual hymns of those under the influence of the Holy Spirit. The one is sinful, the other praises God. The one enslaves and lapses into deeper vice, the other uplifts and purifies the soul. The same social gatherings whose former custom was drunkenness may edify by singing hymns and praising God. Christians of the early centuries gathered in the early hours of morning at appointed places to sing hymns to God or hymns to Christ as God. Frequently this singing was responsive. Acts mentions such gatherings of disciples for interchange of thought and feelings through song. Worship is both public and private. The exalted soul communicates to others and receives from others uplift and spiritual impulses; sluggish thoughts are aroused, devotion is deepened, the indifferent are stirred to hearty praise and trusting prayer. A heart on fire, blessed by the presence of God's Spirit seeks the fellowship of believers and the communion of saints as well as an opportunity to testify to those without the light of the gospel. Speaking frequently may involve testimony, praise and teaching, "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Col. 3:16)." Our religious emotions require the outlet and action required by speaking to others.

DEVOTION AND PRAISE.

In psalms, and hymns and spiritual songs: Our religious expression has social elements. First there must be the inward emotion then the outward voicing of our love in song and

music in the heart. Singing is one of the richest expressions of human speech. As the song of the bird is its chief beauty, so a Christian's praise of his Redeemer bursting from overflowing lips is a beauty of holiness which echoes in the hearts of others and produces melody. Many a sour, sullen, sinful, surly soul has found light, salvation and happiness through hymns and psalms and spiritual songs.

Psalms and hymns are among the richest forms of literature. Their poetic movement stirs and entrances. It has ever been so from the days of the Old Testament Jews to the church of the present time. Luke gave us the *Benedictus*, *Nunc Dimittus* and the *Magnificat*. There is a question whether Paul intends us to draw a distinction between various psalms, hymns and spiritual songs or whether he groups them into a general class. It might be well however to note that there are distinctions.

A psalm is a rhythmical sacred composition sung to musical accompaniment. Psalms were extensively used in the liturgy of the Jewish Synagogue of Old Testament times and during the times of Christ. Acts (4:24) mentions the singing of a psalm in the early church. These sacred songs or poems used for praise and worship of God were found principally in the Book of Psalms, though others were written at various times even after the time of Christ. "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms (Jas. 5:13)." "When ye come together every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying (I Cor. 14:26)." These psalms were original compositions like the psalms of David or his contemporaries—devotional, praising God, intensely spiritual, or they were the memorized psalms of the Old Testament. The saints of many generations found expression through them. The synagogue worship of the Jews centered about them. Well trained choirs supplemented with musical instruments of various sorts gave interpretations of them. Many of the Psalms of David indicate what musical accompaniment was intended for them.

Hymns were distinctive Christian songs of praise which at first were purely vocal. Christ and His disciples sung a hymn at the close of the institution of the Lord's supper. Paul and

Silas broke the silence of the prison in which they were being held by hymns of praise to God. The religious and spiritual emotion of Christians throughout the ages have been expressed in hymns of devotion, love, penitence, aspiration and loyalty. The earliest known Christian hymn which has come to us in completeness is one of St. Clement of Alexandria, in the middle of the third century. Augustine defines a hymn thus: "It must be praise, the praise of God, and it must be sung." These lyrical, poetical expressions are frequently found. For example, the songs of Moses, Hannah, Zechariah and Simeon express adoration and thanksgiving. New Testament hymns are not always labeled as such. Words burst from the lips of the writer without announcement. "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory (I Tim. 3:16)." "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them (Acts 16:25)."

Spiritual songs were odes of experience or meditation, filled with spiritual truth containing exhortations, prophecies and praise. These were in direct contrast with the drunken songs of those under the influence of liquor. On the day of Pentecost, some thought those under the sway of the Holy Spirit were drunk with new wine. The strange tongues with which they spoke were not understood and mystifying. As a rule spiritual songs were elaborate and were sung by one person to varied music in contrast to psalms and hymns sung by individuals, massed and antiphonal choirs. All songs were not acceptable to God. "And I will turn all your songs into lamentation (Amos 8:10)." How many of today's popular songs can be classed as spiritual and acceptable to God?

AUDIBLE WORSHIP.

Singing and making melody: Singing is the language of heaven. How frequently does Revelation mention those who sing about the throne of God. A song is on the lips of the redeemed saints of God. Singing has always had a conspicuous place in the development of the church. Revivals have found them almost indispensable. What would Luther, Wesley,

Sunday, Moody and other great evangelists have done without them? Their stirring, accusing, praising, testifying message has brought many a sinner to his knees and let to his confession of faith in Christ as Savior. Many a song has carried the saints from earth to heaven. Children have been sung to sleep under the soft cadences of hymns.

Singing is vocal expression; making melody is through instrumental playing upon the organ, lute, flute, trumpets, harp and stringed instruments. Our worship of God seeks every possible expression, not to please the ear, not for mechanical perfection, not for praise of men, but for praise of God to be heard by Him. We are to sing not because we have trained voices, but because our heart is overflowing and cannot keep silent. Jesus is near. Christ is coming again. Sin has been washed away by the blood of the Lamb. Prayer has been answered. Mercies are without number. He lives within. Happiness and glory are abounding. The Word comforts. An infinite range of subjects and themes is the occasion of singing and rejoicing. If there were more singing Christians there would be more Christians. The happy church is the filled church. The singing heart is the filled heart. Jesus is there. Such singing has no sham or pretense. Moses sung from joy of his God who never failed. Deborah and Barak could not restrain their rejoicing.

Israel, in Babylon, sang in hope of their return to the homeland and the Israelites returned to Jerusalem sang lest they forget God and be again slaves of their enemies through sin. The Levites were musically trained to lead the assemblies and congregation of Israel in praise to Jehovah. Hezekiah had trained musicians and singers praising God. Singing was practiced in all stages of Israel's redemption, and in all places where they found themselves. A song in the wilderness is recorded in Ex. 15; a song in the Tabernacle in Ps. 47:6; a song in the Temple in I Kin. 10:12, and a song in the camp in II Chron. 20:21. Paul sung in prison. The contagion of spiritual songs banishes fear, despondency, unbelief, timidity, melancholy and depression. We never find ourselves in a condition where singing will not help us. Ps. 46 has been called Luther's Hymn because he always sang it when the way was darkest and filled with unknown perils. The prison be-

came lightened; suffering was bearable with a song on the lips. How many martyrs went to the lions or the stake to die singing! A hymn to them was not the foolish, sentimental ballad of the street vender, of the crooning of the radio, or the cheap, highly colored sheets of the chain stores. Words described a life surrendered to Jesus. The story of His love and of a believer's devotion and hope was sung therefore with understanding, affection, grace, spiritual joy, faith, prayer and knowledge to a crowd of witnesses both seen and unseen. Singing lifts us to that exalted place where we seem to be a part of an invisible multitude. We lose a feeling of loneliness and seem united in Him. Strength comes for our task. "O give thanks unto the Lord for His mercy endureth forever." Nature lifts her voice in the music of the winds through the pines, the lap of laughing waters, the splash of a fountain, the melody of the lark, the crash of pounding surf. "The morning stars sang together, the sons of God shouted for joy" when the acts of creation were completed. The angels "praised God and sang, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill to men." In heaven, "harpers are harping with their harps." On earth, Christians will ever follow the example of prophets, priests and kings, Christ, the apostles, and the early church. Believers of all times and angels sing with their lips and make melody with musical instruments to their God.

A SINGING HEART.

In your heart: New, redeemed and believing hearts will ever sing. What a comfort to those whose lips seem unable to produce other than discord. God hears the melody of the heart. What lack of a musical ear or the distressing criticism of friends makes impossible, God hears and rejoices. Hodge speaks of "the rhythm of the affections not clothed in words." Where the voice can express itself in music it must do so with understanding. "I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with understanding also (I Cor. 14:15)." "God is a spirit and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24)." The heart, together with the lips and fingers praise God, obey His commands, suffer with Him and for Him, counting it all joy to make melody in the soul. God hears the heart unable to sing or play praise of Him. How

much better are these inward joys than the forced songs of the drunkard who finds quarreling, envy, selfishness, greed, injury, gambling, loss and deceit surrounding him.

The Christian lifts his voice towards his fellow-men, but turns his heart toward God. Let the words of our mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to God. Such praises will make us steadfast, immovable and resolved to do the will of God at all costs.

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.

To the Lord: God is directly and indirectly addressed in songs, psalms and hymns. Our thoughts are of Him and to Him. We relate every act in Christian life, recall the message of the Cross and worship God the giver of every good and perfect gift. Sing to keep the devil from tempting us and carrying us away with his deceits; sing to a lost world the story of its redemption and the song of its salvation; sing to invite its inhabitants to accept the gift of God. The words of such a message will crowd out self-consciousness and fear of mechanical imperfection. The orator who sways the crowd must speak from the heart. Gestures are a natural expression of the mind.

Frances Ridley Havergal never sang without the prayer that her Savior might be honored by her.

*"Take my voice and let me sing
Always, only for my King,
Take my lips, and let them be,
Filled with messages from Thee."*

"I will sing praises to the name of the Lord most high (Ps. 7:17)." "Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him, talk ye of all his wondrous works Sing unto the Lord, all the earth, shew forth from day to day his salvation (I Chron. 16:9, 23)."

XX.

LIVE THE THANKFUL LIFE

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."—EPH. 5:20.

OUR CONSTANT DUTY.

Giving thanks always: St. Chrysostum, who suffered greatly during his life because of his loyalty to Jesus of Nazareth, died with these words upon his lips, "Glory be to God for all things." He with Paul had learned to be content with his state whatever it might be because God was working out that which was well pleasing to Him. Blessings of God cannot be included in a general, once and for all prayer of thanksgiving. New mercies come each day. Temporal and spiritual blessings are as incessant as the air we breathe. Ceaseless obligations to thank God, the provider and giver of every good and perfect gift, require constant expressions of recognition and appreciation. A Christian can no more cease giving God thanks than a bride can stop telling her husband of her love. She promised at the altar to love him until death did them part, and no effort is needed to fulfill the vow. So constantly, universally, incessantly, joyfully like a bubbling fountain, on the Sabbath and on week days, by day and by night, let us give thanks in the name of His only begotten Son. Paul tells us to "pray without ceasing (I Thess 5:17)." Here, too, we are enjoined to "give thanks always." Regardless of our occupation or condition take time to tell God our acceptance of His gracious gifts and our gratitude for them. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Thanksgiving is the root of all praise. Thanksgiving fills the heart with song and the lips with joy. A thankful heart is humble and self-effacing, giving God all glory, careful to observe and speak of all the known acts of our Lord's loving kindness, and with David, singing, "Bless the Lord, oh my

soul and forget not all his benefits." Giving thanks implies more than words. A life must show forth His praise. Our gratitude is empty if we do not live for Him and do His will with abandon and persistence. Gratitude which does not follow thanksgiving with acts of worship and deeds of service in the name of Christ is base and empty. After Jesus gave thanks He called Lazarus to come forth from the grave. The story is told of a person cast adrift upon a desert island who fasted and prayed the first day with no result. Upon the second day, thanksgiving and prayer was rewarded by the sight of a sail on the near horizon and eventual rescue. Thanksgiving has been described as "a sense of favor received from a benefactor, a desire to acknowledge it and express our feelings and sense of unworthiness."

THE MATTER OF THANKSGIVING.

For all things: "Give thanks for all things (Col. 3:17)." We are to continually give God thanks for everything—known and unknown blessings, those limitless and "unsearchable riches of grace" which men are wont commonly to call evils, but which may be blessings in disguise, for adversity, loss, illness and suffering—knowing that God's will is "good, perfect and acceptable (Rom. 12:2)." His love may be seen in everything He sends. "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you (1 Thess. 5:18)." We can "glory in tribulation." We can suffer for Christ's sake. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." We can thank God for all that God sends at all times. "He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able." Let us therefore thank Him with our heart, with our lips, with instruments of music, with our hands and feet, with our gifts and with our life—in all the fullness of love. Thank Him for the small everyday mercies which frequently prove the most valuable we possess. The atom is as much a work of God and as perfect in every detail as is the Rock of Gibraltar or the far-distant star. We are to thank Him for what appears to be evil—those blessings in disguise. Bitter medicine has its place as well as the sweetest of ripened fruits. We are to thank Him for the extraordinary red-letter days when the desires of a lifetime are being realized and the skies are bright

and filled with sunshine. We are to thank Him for those denials of our prayers, those negative as well as positive answers which the fullness of time shows were providential. We are to thank Him for public and private blessings, the past, present and future, the temporal and eternal, physical and spiritual, disaster and success, fulfilled hopes and loss, poverty and wealth, bitter and sweet and sunshine and rain.

All are indispensable. Temptation and illness are the storms of life, the contrary winds which harden the fibre of our lives and strengthen character. Freedom from danger leads to weakness. We are to be thankful for the success of others and their capacity to give, serve and do what we long to do ourselves. Let us "rejoice in hope of the glory of God (Rom. 5:2)," "whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory (I Pet. 1:8)." We can glory in the Cross of Christ towering over the wrecks of time. Heaven and earth, air and water, fire, earth and heavens, rain and snow, rivers and oceans, flowers, birds, beasts and creeping things, light and darkness, clouds and clear skies, death and life, calm and storm, liberty and confinement, work and unemployment, booms and depression—there is no limit to causes of thanksgiving. "All" means everything. The Christian will eventually be able to exercise faith to the extent that he can give God thanks for everything which seems to be the Lord's will. There need be no question upon this point. If our hearts are in tune with the Infinite the difference between our will and the Lord's will will be apparent. Pray that God's will may be done in all things, then begin working with might and main to do what, at the time, seems to be the Lord's will.

THE OBJECT OF WORSHIP.

Unto God and the Father: Prayer is directed to the one and true God, our God and our Father, the Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who is the source, the giver and Creator of all mercies, the fountain from whom all blessings flow in creation, redemption, providence and election. Some trying to distinguish between these two names do so by saying that God is the source of all power and the Father is the source of all love. God and the Father are one, but the names

indicate attributes which help us to understand Him. God suggests might and power which is unapproachable. We thank God as a servant thanks his master for blessings and food eaten in a small, unpainted, floorless, roomless cabin in the woods. We thank the Father as a son who sits at the table with his parent, loving him, adoring him, cherishing him and having fellowship with him. Both experiences are in our heart. The justice of God separates us from Him as a friend standing before the bar of justice is separated from the judge about to try him. The love of God causes us with John, to lean upon the bosom of His Son and with the disciples, wish to be close to Him in heaven. We are to be thankful that the loving Father is the great God and the Almighty Jehovah is a tender compassionate Father. We are sons of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.

THE MANNER OR MEANS.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ: Relying upon Him we come to God, through Christ our Advocate and Counselor, who pleads our case before the throne of God in heaven. We approach God through His Son, our Mediator. "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it (John 14: 13, 14)." "Whatsoever ye shall ask the father in my name, he will give it you—ask and ye shall receive that your joy may be full—At that day ye shall ask in my name (John 16:23, 24, 26)." Christ is our argument in asking, our incentive for thanking. In Christ we see more of God than elsewhere. In creation man was made like God, but in redemption God became like man in His Son Jesus—our only Mediator and Intercessor. So "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you (I Thess. 5:18)."

Glance for a moment at the wide Scriptural range of that for which we are to give thanks in the name of Christ. "In my name they shall cast out devils (Mark 16:17)"; "I kept them in thy name (John 17:12)"; Peter speaks "in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk (Acts 3:6)"; Paul preached "boldly at Damascus in the name of Christ (Acts 9:27)"; "He commanded them to be baptized in the name of

the Lord (Acts 10:48)"; "But ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus (I Cor. 6:11)"; "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow (Phil 2:10)"; "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God and the Father by him (Col. 3:17)"; "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord (Jas. 5:14)"; "If ye be reproached for the name of the Lord, happy are ye, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth on you (I Pet. 4:14)"; "By him let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually (Heb. 13:15)"; "Even devils are subject to us through thy name (Luke 10:17)"; "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you (John 14:26)." In the light of these promises, how low is our mark? How few of the tools we have used. How little have we drawn upon the vast resources which God has placed within our reach. Let us give thanks for all things unto God and the Father in the name of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ because we have laid hold of the promises of God and have tested them all, and found that Jesus never fails.

XXI.

MUTUAL CONDESCENSION

"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."
—EPH. 5:21.

HUMILIATION.

Submitting yourselves: This is the fourth evidence of the presence of the Spirit. The believer can not masquerade in vanity, pride, conceit, superiority and self importance, and be Christ-like. Christ always placed God's will above His own. In the garden of Gethsemane He withdrew from the disciples, fell upon His face and prayed, "O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt (Matt. 26:39)." The second time He prayed as before, "Thy will be done," and the third time He prayed as before. The cup was bitter, but He was willing to drink it for the glory of the Father and the saving of humanity. Hebrews comments upon this submission: "Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered (Heb. 5:8)." Paul wished to winter with the church at Corinth and spend some time with them, but his hope depended upon an expression of the will of the Lord (I Cor. 16:7). We are to serve one another. "Ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another (Gal. 5:13)." All are to exercise this virtue "Likewise ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time (I Pet. 5:5, 6)." The church can only be a pattern of harmony, peace, worship, unity and service when there is this mutual preferring of each other in the name of Christ and for the purpose of doing the will of God. Pride is a great besetting sin. It sometimes ex-

presses itself in blindness to the virtues of others, in resentment when not re-elected to office, in unwillingness to give way to others and share with them the responsibilities of office, in feeling that somehow work cannot get along without us. The person has not yet been found who is indispensable; the world somehow moves along; the church progresses; the work of God is done. A captain of a great ocean greyhound guides the ship safely across the wide horizons where there is no sight of land; he conquers or escapes storms; he crosses powerful currents and arrives at the mouth of the desired harbor. A pilot is taken on board; then the captain relinquishes his post, turns the wheel and the bridge over to the pilot who guides the ship to its dock. Jesus, the Master Pilot, wants to come on board and guide us safely into harbor. What folly to give Him no room and say, "We will carry on."

Modesty is a cherished virtue. It pays to let others speak well of our gifts. Leave praise to others, even though it may seem slow in coming. Many despair and feel they must blow their own horn or others will never learn of them. Modern advertising has taught many to announce their wares lest they remain in obscurity and poverty. Advertising has built up great corporations. The Gospel must be advertised. We are to carry it to the uttermost parts of the world, but it is the Gospel, not the messenger; the cross, not the carrier thereof; it is the message of the Book, not the binding, which is important. We are to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Our Christian duty is to give deference to others upon the gratification of what the customer wants rather than planning an establishment to compliment the proprietor.

This submission never implies compromise between right and wrong. We are never to yield to temptation. Christ said, "Get thee behind me, Satan." The martyrs died horribly, in order to die triumphantly and unflinchingly in their loyalty to Christ. Daniel would not bow the knee to other than Jehovah even though the king had to be disobeyed and a den of lions awaited him. Submission commands humility, freedom from personal conceit, a willingness to learn, satisfaction in being rewarded in heaven rather than on earth. The true believer is free from the arrogance and intellectual conceit which believes itself to be better than others, more favored of

God. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." God has not revealed all His will to one. Solomon was very wise, but God had a message for the prophets which followed him and for the writers of the New Testament. Paul wrote a great deal more than Solomon, and a great deal more practically and far more spiritually. More souls have been saved by the pleadings of Paul than were ever saved by the Proverbs of Solomon. The Lord who made each face different in cast, giving infinite variety to individuals, has also left some of His wisdom to be revealed through others in the fullness of time.

FELLOW-CHRISTIANS ARE TO BE HONORED.

One to another: Notice the absence of qualifying phrases. Our superiors, equals and inferiors are all eligible to this submission. How many times we hear some one say, "Why should I yield? Do you think for a moment I will let them tell me what to do? I should say not. Who does she think I am?" Or, "Who does she think she is? Before I do that—." We are to make concessions, be less self-assertive, love and be loved, bless and be blessed. He that was in the form of God emptied himself and took the form of a servant (Phil 2:6, 7). In answer to the question, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Christ took a little child and said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Jesus proved the rule when He took a towel and girded Himself to wash the disciples' feet when none of them was willing to admit inferiority to the others and perform that humble task. They wanted to be next to Jesus in heaven and were worried about places of preferment. But Jesus said to them, "I am among you as one who serves (John 13:3-5)." If the Son of God could perform the task of washing dusty feet, who are we to object to any humble task? Christ began at home being a dutiful son and obeying His parents; having schooled Himself in this task He assumed His Messianic work and became subject to the will of the Father. How many times enemies sought to trap Him into admitting otherwise. How keen were the answers they received. "Be subject to the powers that be. Give honor to whom honor is due." There is a place for civil jurisdiction. Render to Caesar the things which are Caesar's. Pay tribute. "Submit

yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well (I Pet. 2:13)." Ecclesiastical laws have their place. The growing church attaches certain rules to itself that work may be done in decency and in order. Denominations have grown about creeds and rules of faith and conduct which those attaching themselves to that faith are asked to follow. There are always those who want all the benefits, but none of the disadvantages of associations, churches and disciplines. They want to wear the uniform of the navy, fight in the marines, scout with the air-patrol, be governed by army regulations, and take their vacations with the submarine crew. Sometimes, you find preachers who want to occupy prominent or profitable pulpits and flit from denomination to denomination in their search, but, having obtained the pulpit, they want freedom and independence from any theological restrictions. Some want to be credited members of a church, yet do not wish to subscribe to the doctrines of that church. Many would like to be with Christ when the roll is called up yonder, but would rather be a friend of Pilate or of Rome during the period of their earthly ascendancy. We are to submit to Christ, and, in the spirit of Christ, submit ourselves one to another.

This spirit of submission one to another is best seen perhaps in the home. Husband, wife and children have to make adjustments to each other. No one can be "boss." If each love, honor and trust, there will be few occasions to insist upon obedience. No man liveth unto himself. We need to supplement our abilities with the talents of others. How much fuller life has become now that we eat our food from the four corners of the world instead of from the garden in our own back yard. Christian service is enriched by combined effort. Corporations have found an executive committee prevents many a mistake. Churches have boards of elders, deacons and trustees to discuss problems. Two heads are better than one. Solos are beautiful, but how magnificent is a great chorus! How inspiring and uplifting is the majesty of a great oratorio! There is music in the tinkle of a drop of water from a leaf upon the pavement, but how majestic is the

crash of the surf upon the rockbound shore! Jesus exalted the unit. He magnified the importance of the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost soul, but when work was to be accomplished He sent the disciples out two by two. He gathered twelve disciples of conflicting personalities, differing views and abilities to launch the church and proclaim His Second Coming. What opportunities are found when we submit ourselves one to another! It is helpful to listen to the training of a great symphonic orchestra or choir. Instruments and voices blend so that it is almost impossible to distinguish a single voice in the harmony whose purpose is to exalt the composer and his work instead of the artist of the moment. Our task is to show Christ to the world, to prove that He still lives in the hearts of believers.

We cannot do this when we are so busy being heard, honored and received credit that there is no time to honor Christ or talk about Him. Fanny Crosby made it a rule never to sing unless she could honor Christ in some way or another. She accepted no invitation to sing if people merely wished to hear her voice or say they had the famous hymn-writer in their church or meeting. A Scottish chieftain wishing to call his clansmen together framed a lighted cross, burned its extremities and extinguished the fire with the blood of a goat. This cross was sent by swift messengers to the leading men in certain villages who upon receiving it were promptly to call all men capable of bearing arms to the place designated as a meeting-place. The penalty for refusal was the bitterness of pain both of fire and the sword. As promptly and implicitly as those Scottish Highlanders obeyed the summons of the Fiery Cross or Cross of Shame, let us submit ourselves to the Cross of Jesus, and the authority of God's Word, the rule of His divine Spirit and the guidance of our great Lord and Master. Submit in earthly matters to superiors in age, wisdom and authority, but in heavenly matters, submit to equals and inferiors in the name of Christ.

THE MOTIVE FOR SUBMISSION.

In the fear of God: Reverence for God, desire to please Him, and fear of failing to do His will in all things is to be the governing motive in our lives. Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.

We call Him Master and so He is; therefore yield all of life to Him. In our eagerness to serve Christ and cause others to yield their lives, purpose to be all things to all men if by any means we may be able to save some. Our real inward submission is to God. "Thou, God, seest me." We give account to God. We do not want the Lamb's Book of Life opened to find we have failed because of having been headstrong, selfish and foolish in our pride. Pride goeth before a fall. Nabal was "such a son of Belial, that no man could speak to him."

Fear of displeasing Him is to be the motive of our conduct, self-effacement and true humility of the heart. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men (II Cor. 5:11)." "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he (I Cor. 10:22)?" Learn early the lesson that to submit ourselves one to another in the fear of the Lord is a way of honor. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

XXII.

THE NATURE OF A WIFE'S OBEDIENCE TO HER HUSBAND

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord." —EPH. 5:22.

THE DUTY.

Wives submit yourselves: Having spoken in the preceding verse of the mutual submission of all Christians to Christ and to each other, Paul takes the application to the sanctity of the home and applies it to the relationship of husband and wife. In Col. 3: 18, 19, he speaks in similar vein, but gives only one verse to husband and wife. Here an opportunity presents itself to use the relationship of Christ to the church to develop the correct attitude of wife and husband. Happiness and holiness depend upon acceptance of Christ's rule in the heart. The marriage relationship is similar to the union of Christ and the church which is His body. Obedience on the part of the wife and love on the part of the husband will not involve unpleasant complications or the exercise of tyrannical rule if both give Jesus first place in their lives.

The wife is to surrender herself to her husband as any believer is to seek the happiness of others. Christ became a servant to teach truths not otherwise learned. A wife is to submit, not obey. There is a difference. Obedience is for servants and children. Home is the wife's empire. Here she reigns. A voluntary, sympathetic relationship exists between two equals in the eyes of God and themselves.

The gospels recognize and secure women's spiritual equality with man and man's responsible leadership in home relationships. The home is a school for mutual and unselfish duty. Love patiently and persistently finds a way out. Neither expresses undue assertiveness or desire to lord it over the other. Love for Christ and love for life's helpmeet produce similar

attitudes and expressions. Attention, love, consideration and loyalty are inspired by divine love. Marriage is exalted and holy.

The question arises, "Has modern life changed the position of woman?" Undoubtedly woman has been under submission to her husband and been the burden-bearer. In savage or backward tribes, woman's place is very low. Does this verse uphold the man who wishes his wife to obey him in all things and grant him absolute submission? A decided movement towards woman's rights has recently been evident. The franchise has been given women. Women may now receive the same training as men. They are finding their place in the halls of legislation, in business and professional life. During the depression the wife was frequently the breadwinner of the family, the husband doing the work of the wife in the home. Has the marriage relationship changed because of these tendencies? If so, are they Christian? "All are one in Christ, there is neither male nor female (Gal. 3:28)." The gospels do not justify an inferior place to women. There is a vast difference between paying deference because of love and devotion to Christ and paying such obeisance through compulsion. "He that is greatest is servant of all." The home is not a monarchy, but a democracy; not one mighty and the other lowly; not one all-powerful and the other subservient; not one giving orders and the other receiving them without question. When filled with the Spirit, both seek the good and comfort of the other in Christ. Some men have to be "boss" in their own home simply because they can be boss nowhere else. "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence (I Tim. 2:11, 12)" is no justification for a husband's ruling with a rod of iron.

As the church looks up to Christ its Head, reverences Jesus and obeys God's commands, so the wife is to be influenced by the one to whom she has pledged her all till death do them part. "But she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband (I Cor. 7:34)." Defects in her husband and disappointment over him does not alter her obligation to love, honor, trust and obey in the Lord, in those things which are not "contrary to God." Titus urges

wives to "be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." God addressing Eve concerning her fall (Gen. 3:16) says "And thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." God made Eve to be an helpmeet for Adam (Gen. 2:18). The true purpose of submission is found in I Pet. 3:1-2, "Likewise ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that if any obey not the word, they may be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear." Pride and vanity frequently stand in the way of the complete fulfillment of the wife's duty toward her husband. This imperfect service makes it impossible to give that honor, respect and reverence which honors God and her husband. The duty of the wife is to renounce self as Christ did not His own will but the will of God.

THE PERSONS.

Unto your own husband: The marriage relationship is holy and presupposes one wife and one husband, rather than a promiscuous relationship between those who know not God and make no profession of loyalty and surrender to Christ. Surely this denial of self for Jesus is not unreasonable. The same quality of service in working for Jesus is seen in a wife's rendering of herself to her husband. Submission to one's husband is no degradation, but an honor. No privilege of birth, no exclusive environment and no social standing can be given as an excuse for not yielding to the husband. A husband is to be more than a convenience, protection, public ornament, fashion or article to be acquired because most women seem to have a man. The husband is to be the support of the house, to give that supervision which his physical superiority is supposed to furnish him. The king's decree in the days of Esther was to this effect. "All wives shall give to their husbands honor, both to great and small (Esth. 1:20)." This is rather difficult when intemperance, bestial conduct, inconsiderateness, sins of their youth or indulgence of later years have made them seem unworthy of love and honor. Many marriages are consummated under the impression that love cannot exist unless a high regard is present. Illness, loss, wider outlooks and sympathizing friends frequently alter facts. Shall the

wife keep on with her promise? Shall she resort to divorce or separation? Shall she keep true? How can she compel herself to show an affection or loyalty not in her heart? Will her prayers and sacrifice of herself be justified? Can God, or *will* God, rekindle the love which once brought such perfect bliss and contentment? Is there a limit to submission? Can a word or act be the straw which breaks the back of marital obligation? The Bible teaches loyalty to the Lord and in the Lord. God persists in His love of the sinner. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly." While some husbands are beasts, love for God and for them may result in finally saving the soul of the husband. The sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross accomplished what He had been unable to do by any other method. The result depends upon the objective and the spirit. God must be first in all things. God must stand first in your heart. Love for Him is to be the master passion and desire.

The word "husband" means master of the house or head of the house who by careful thrift, prudence and economy manages or directs the household like a steward. The word "wife" implies "a weaver of cloth." In the early days, a wife was a stay-at-home, busy with the processes of weaving cloth needed to keep the family warm and clothed. The Book of Proverbs closes with a beautiful description of such a home and such a wife. This machine age has taken from the home many of its distinctive functions and tasks. Leisure has increased by leaps and bounds. The home is more of a dormitory or temporary abiding-place. The clubs, hotels, resorts, hospitals, and even the church have appropriated much of the responsibilities of the home. This lack of physical and mental employment and pride in personal accomplishment in the arts of the home has removed a source of happiness and contentment. The idle mind is apt to be disloyal and suspicious. A busy mind has no time for idle gossip and jealous watching. A wife who loves her husband and her God, and a husband who loves his wife and his God, will not go far astray in the interpretation of this command. Both husband and wife are equal in the eyes of God. There is no more joy in heaven over the turning of a wife to God than over the turning of a husband to God. Sex is never included in the promises of

salvation. There is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents. Let both have submission, reverence, obedience and subjection. God's handiwork is as perfect in the woman as in man, even though man was created first.

THE MANNER OR NATURE OF THE WIFE'S OBEDIENCE.

As unto the Lord: The ultimate reach of life is not to the husband as lord of all creation, but to God as Creator of all. The wife is to yield as unto the Lord, accepting God's will in all circumstances. The husband is never to assume a position of absolute authority to the wife comparable to that existing between the Lord and His followers. The wife is to give honor "as it is fit in the Lord (Col. 3:18)" with the purpose of being an ornament to her husband and doing well by her meek and lowly spirit. Hodge speaks to the point: "This does not mean similarity as though the obedience of the wife was to be devout and as unconditional as that which she is bound to render to the Lord," he says; "but her obedience to her husband is to be regarded as part of her obedience to the Lord." This religious motive removes what might otherwise prove to be a burden. When the husband is obeyed it is a service rendered to the Lord, "whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men." A willing and sincere spirit must actuate the service rendered. The husband's official relation as head of the wife parallels the relation of Christ as head of the church. The submission of the wife is not in any point to be a violation of her loyalty to the Lord. No husband has any right to compel obedience on a point contradicting the dictates of conscience. Love of God rises above love of husband, parents, or children. The Lord never misuses His authority. His laws are just and lead always to good and happiness. Let the husband rule as not to violate any of the laws of God.

XXIII.

THE GROUND OF THE WIFE'S OBEDIENCE

"For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church and he is the Saviour of the body."

—EPH. 5:23.

REASON OF SUBMISSION.

For the husband is the head of the wife: There cannot be two heads in a family. The body has but one head, hence unity of action. "The head of every man is Christ, the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God (I Cor. 11:3)." The husband possesses those masculine attributes which normally give him the right to command. His strength, size, dominance and qualities of leadership are of importance here. The woman was created from, and for man (I Cor. 11:7-9). Society has been founded upon this assumption. Wrong emphasis frequently has been placed to justify usurpation of power never intended for him. The masculine and feminine compliment each other rather than superimpose themselves upon each other. The body is under the head; so in some respects the wife is under the husband. But the body cannot glory over the head nor can the head glory over the body. They are one and inseparable. Christ is always the pattern. As Christ is our head and all in all, so the husband is to be head, but let him violate none of the attitudes or words of Christ as he rules over the woman. Let the husband as head of the wife do nothing which Christ as Head of the church would not do. As every desire of Christ is for the salvation of the soul, let the husband as lovingly and solicitously see the spiritual welfare of the life which has been entrusted to his care. There cannot be any mistake when this attitude is faithfully followed. If self interest, personal comfort and the advancement of individual ideals are placed first; if the wife becomes merely a tool for the husband's use or a

servant to minister unto him, the husband is misusing his office.

As head of the wife the husband has the responsibility for her soul's welfare. How many husbands assume this responsibility? As a rule the wife has to plead and persuade her husband to be true to his vows of church membership and loyalty to Christ, set a good example before the children, give the tithe, participate in the family altar and do those things which a pastor or priest should do for his flock. A husband as head of a house is a priest to the members of his household; as such, his duty is to so direct their thoughts towards God that if God should call him, the family would be spiritually established and his eyes could close in peace, knowing that in the fulness of time all would be united in heaven. Of what value are the worries, sacrifices and struggles towards material, social and educational success if the children so trained, so established and so provided for are lost to him throughout all eternity? Let the husband be the spiritual guiding genius of the home; let the husband find a place for devotional life, worship, reading and explanation of the Scriptures. Precious souls are entrusted to his care.

DIVINE HEADSHIP OVER THE CHURCH.

Even as Christ is the head: Christ is the Pattern. The husband is to follow this example in as many respects as possible. It will be impossible to carry the similarity in all directions, inasmuch as Christ was the Divine Son of God; we are but mortals. Christ was sinless; with all our efforts we fail lamentably in our struggle for perfection. Paul stresses the high honor which is placed upon marriage relationships which demonstrate a union of difficult but tremendous implications—a union as important as that of Christ and the church or God and Christ. Let the words of Christ be the goal of the husband who would enter the mind of Jesus. "I came not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me."

Christ is the Head of the church, of the family and the individual. The same ocean water is found in the midst of the sea and in the hollows and bays along the coastline. Christ speaks through the husband. A divine counselor gives the words of instruction for home administration. The wife is to

her husband what the church is to Christ. Calvin writes, "As the husband is the head of the wife, he should not only rule but protect and bless."

Glance for a moment at what Jesus is as the Head. He possesses authority to rule, power to govern, and fitness to exercise His privilege. His union with believers gives Him sympathy and direct contact. He tells us, as He told Paul, "Arise and go (Acts 9:6)." The husband exercises control over the wife. No one else is as close in understanding, no one else can be near in the moment of need, no one else has such legal, moral, physical and spiritual privileges. Love is to open and close doors. Love is everything. The love of Christ charges earthly love with vitality, color, beauty and interest in heavenly things.

THE CHURCH IS THE BRIDE.

Of the church: The professed believers who have surrendered all to Jesus constitute the living body of Christ which is united to Him and subject to Him. The marriage of husband and wife is similar to the wedding of the Lord and the church. The church is Christ's and His alone. "For thy maker is thine husband, the Lord of hosts in his name (Isa. 54:5)." "God hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels (Isa. 61:10)." "As thy bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee (Isa. 62:5)." "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you (Jer. 3:14)." "My covenant they break, although I am an husband unto them, saith the Lord (Jer. 31:32)." See also Hos. 2:2-20; Matt. 9:15, 25:1-10; Jno. 3:29; Gal. 4:21-31; Rev. 21:2, 9; 22:17.

THE HEAD IS ALSO SAVIOR.

And he is the saviour of the body: As Savior, the Lord differs from the husband who can never be a savior. The husband may bring his wife to Jesus who can save her body and soul. In a certain sense we correctly speak of a husband as being the one who possesses responsibility for saving his wife from the world, shielding her from want, privation and pain. He

preserves her, he rescues her from pitfalls of the world, he safeguards her health, insures her against want by endowments and legacies, but this service can in no way be compared with the work of Christ.

Some believe this clause is added to exalt Christ, as it is a phrase of praise and thanksgiving and appears to have no relation to the discussion of wife and husband. The husband deals with the body; Jesus rules over the soul. The body perishes but the soul lives throughout eternity. The wife is to love her husband, but this affection is never to displace her love for her Savior. We are to love God with our whole mind and body and soul. No husband on the other hand has any reason to be jealous of the wife's devotion to her church and her God and begrudge her the time she devotes to the cause and work of the church on earth. She has a duty towards her soul which rises above her duty towards him. "Jesus came into the world to save sinners (I Tim. 1:15)." "We shall be saved from wrath through him (Rom. 5:9)." The wife and husband have a common duty to "confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus (Rom. 10:9)."

Catch the glory of these references to Jesus as Savior of the body. "Unto you is born a Saviour which is Christ the Lord (Luke 2:11)"; "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and Saviour (Acts 5:31)"; "God according to his promise has raised unto Israel a Saviour (Acts 13:23)"; "From heaven we look for the Saviour (Phil. 3:20)"; "Our Saviour has appeared . . . abolishing death . . . brought life and immortality through the gospel (II Tim. 1:10)"; "Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour (Titus 1:4)"; "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13)"; we receive a "renewing of the Holy Spirit through Christ our Saviour (Titus 3:5)"; we "obtain precious faith through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ . . . and . . . entrance to the everlasting kingdom of Christ (II Pet 1:1)"; we "escape pollutions of the world through knowledge of the Saviour (II Pet. 2:20)."

The headship of her husband is the ground of the wife's obedience. This headship is similar in many of its sacred responsibilities to the relationship of Christ to the church which He loves. May every wife and husband be true to this high trust. Let no husband do less for his wife than Christ has done and stands willing to do for those who love Him and give themselves to Him. The husband cannot save his wife, but he can throw a life preserver to her; he can lead her to the Great Physician; he can bring her to Jesus.

XXIV.

THE EXTENT OF A WIFE'S OBEDIENCE TO HER HUSBAND

"Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything."—EPH. 5:24.

CHRIST THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH.

Therefore as the church: The general principle of Christian submission in the Lord is followed by the particular parallel of wives submitting to their husbands as the church submits to Christ its head. This phrasing of a husband's authority gives no room for dogmatic exercise of privilege or lording over the weaker member of the marriage union. Christ never takes advantage of the church. He rules lovingly and justly. The true husband who loves his wife and rules over her seeking her welfare and the salvation of her soul is never going to do that which will humiliate her or make her a vassal in household responsibilities. The wife will yield that obedience in the Lord which is given by the church to its creator and sustainer. In so doing she will make no mistake; her conscience will need no conciliations, nor will her will be broken; the Lord will sustain her, the Holy Spirit will guide her. Life may not be a bed of roses. The church is seldom free from dissensions, divisions, confusion, debate and frequent difficult problems, but as the Lord causes the church to eventually triumph through her faith in the loving provision of her Lord, so the wife will find joy and peace as she prayerfully seeks to do the will of the Lord in her home for her husband and those whom the Lord has given to her. The husband may be unsympathetic, he may sorely try her, persistently refuse to answer the call of the church and fail to enter into the devotions of the home or the religious training of the children, but prayer will be rewarded.

The answer may come after the death of the one making the

petition. Death is frequently the price of penitence to a sin-laden husband. But if a wife pray for the Lord's will to be done in her, and through her; if she pray that her testimony and example may lead her husband to the Lord, her prayers will avail. She must be Christ-centered. Her love for her Master must be the great passion of her life in all things, and at all times. As the church is safe, so will she be safe as long as she is under the direction of an omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent Lord. As the church is called out from the world to live a separate life in Christ who has saved her, so the wife separates herself from her parental family and attaches herself to her husband in order that she may add to the body of Christ. Her family is a sacred trust. She has the rare privilege of leading them to the Savior and planting Christian ideals in their lives. As she closes her eyes in the sleep of death it should be with the consciousness that she has done her part, to increase the structure of the church redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.

A LOVING SERVICE

Is subject to Christ: The church looks to Christ as her only Lord and gives submission to Him. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power (Ps. 110:3)." We shall have no cause for regret when following these commandments. "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments (Ps. 119:6)." "I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word (Ps. 119:16)." Someone has spoken of the church as being a Christocracy free from tyranny, oppression and unjust rule. Christ is supreme. Politics has no place in the church and its administration and government. This should be true of an individual congregation and the church at large. The chief business of the church is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever; to "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God (Col. 4:12)" and to be "faithful unto death and receive a crown of life (Rev. 2:10)." The church is subject unto Christ in a way in which a wife can never be subject to her husband. He is human flesh. Both are liable to sin and fall short of the glory of God. Christ is sinless and sits at the right hand of God to judge the quick and the dead. The reverence of a wife for her husband can

never approach that of the church for its Deity and yet there can be that meekness, humility, desire to serve God in all things and a dependent looking for counsel and advice. Marriage is a cooperative enterprise in which God sits as chairman of the board.

THE DUTY OF SUBMISSION.

So let the wives be: The wives are to be subject to their husbands. Many do not want to admit such an attitude. They will grant equality of partnership but they desire independence of action and decision. They wish liberty. Many marriages are matters of convenience; not made in the Lord. No wonder there is such a high ratio of divorces and separations. The conscience seems no more sensitive to having failed than if a family decides to move to another location, being dissatisfied with their present residence. Separation is not a moral issue to many who see in marriage a purely legal attachment and govern themselves accordingly. Wives are to place themselves in loving submission to the will of their husbands; to reverence him who is worthy of reverence; to labor daily with meekness and the consciousness that success in matrimony is a union of effort; to live with modesty and without bragging of accomplishments which differ from those of her husband, yet compliment his virtues; and to economically serve him so that he may be reasonably free from the harassment of trying to live within the family income when she by foolish and extravagant expenditures keeps him constantly financially involved with injudicious purchasing. Christ leads His flock as a shepherd who knows the pastures, the water-holes, the dangers from poisonous weeds, and the places where wolves and those who prey upon the weak and helpless lambs of the flock are apt to attack. The husband protects his wife from the dangers which threaten the home. Because of his tender solicitude, his wisdom, his knowledge of the way of God and the teachings of Scripture, he proves himself worthy of the offering of a willing and trustful heart from the one who has selected him as one among ten thousand. The command applies and can be applied only by a husband who is given to the work of God.

THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH.

To their own husband: The Bible clearly limits the duty of a wife to one husband and that her own husband. He alone possesses the treasure of her affections, heart and service. If love once existed, it can be revived regardless of recent apparent incompatibility. All things are possible with God. If marriage is the will of God, it is God's will for the journey to be completed to the safe harbor at the end of life. The scripture cannot condone promiscuous loves and wandering affections. The family cannot endure under such conditions nor can the church prosper. We cannot satisfactorily testify for God with a clear conscience while we are doing what is contrary to God's commandments. A family should resemble a church in its life and worship of the God who first conceived of the family and its relationships and responsibilities. The family needs to help each other if the house is to shine as a light for the gospel. No one can enter the home at the right moment to say the word and do that which will save the day for God as can a husband and wife. Each should make their peace with God and with each other before placing their heads upon the pillow. If the sun goes down upon a condition which will not allow them to say "Good night" without reservation, trouble lies ahead. A breach may widen beyond possibility of being closed. Bitterness in the home is an almost unquenchable fire. Marriage is a spiritual relationship. We have one God, one Savior, one faith, one baptism, one holy sacrament of Communion and one holy Spirit.

Wives are to be loyal to one husband and that their own husband. No one husband can combine all virtues. He excels in some; other men may be superior in qualities in which a husband is weak. This should not lead to chaffing, irritation and sharing time and affection with another's husband. This is apt to cause a breaking of family ties. Jealousy is a terrible thing to plant in any human heart. Subjection to husbands is to only be in those matters which are right. A wife can never be excused in God's eyes for doing evil because her husband commands it. She can never be blameless for permitting her children to form evil and vicious habits because the husband teaches them these things. She must fight for the right to do

everything to protect her loved ones against any and all which would take them from the family's heavenly Lord-given goal.

THE EXTENT OF THE HUSBAND'S AUTHORITY

In everything: There are no exceptions. In matters great and small, in affairs pleasant and painful, in acts which are public and private, in all interests and relations, Christ comes before the interests of the husband. No one sphere of social life is to be excluded. Neither have any right to say, "In this I will be supreme; here you may not enter." This does not imply that the husband has unlimited authority in degree. "Authority extends to all departments," says Hodge, "but is limited in all by the authority of God and their natures." No authority can make us do what God forbids. Dare to be a Daniel in this respect. No authority can keep us from doing what we know to be our Christian duty and obligation. We are in the world to be about our heavenly Father's business. Wives are to be Christlike in their obedience. They can never escape from that which is lawful according to the law of God and those duties involved in membership in the church which is a part of the living body of Christ. "In everything give thanks." In everything be subject unto their husbands. Life is an out and out commitment. "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and to God the things which are God's." We are not to give Him a part of ourselves—our minds and not our practices—our testimony and not our lives—our prayers and not our substance—our money and not our service and confession before men. Giving of the best to the Master involves giving all to Him. "Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee." A wife, in spirit, says to her husband, "Take my life; let us work out His will in our journeying together; let us make a home which shall speak for Him; let us have friends who shall recognize and walk with us in the way; let us make our home beautiful but not to the exclusion of tithing to the word of God. He gives us nine-tenths of all we hand and hold for ourselves; let us not object to one-tenth belonging to the Lord." Let marriage be a complete mutual surrender of life in the Lord, guided by His Spirit, for the purpose of making these stones perfect in a living temple. We represent bricks in a great structure.

XXV.

EVEN AS CHRIST

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." —EPH. 5:25.

THE DUTY OF HUSBANDS.

Husbands, love your wives: We now view the ideal Christian husband and his love. Wives are to submit, husbands are to love. In Paul's letter to the Colossians husbands are told not to be bitter against their wives. Presumably this was in a home where the wife had accepted the Lord as her Savior and the husband was still a heathen. The situation might become tense. The wife had a religious duty to make every effort to bring her husband to a saving knowledge of God so she might have her loved one with her throughout all eternity and not be separated by death. This effort was undoubtedly resented to the point of bitterness. If there was real love between them such a situation could not continue. "Love suffereth long and is kind." No claim is ever to be made against the wife which is not prompted by love. Nothing is said here about duty or rights. Love is everything. It is love which makes a husband worthy of the name, and it is love which causes a wife to submit herself to her husband. She need fear no bondage, injustice or harshness if love rules in the home. "Give honour as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life: that your prayers be not hindered (I Pet. 3:7)." "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth (I John 3:18)."

Love is one of the most beautiful words in the Gospel. It is the summary of the Gospel. No other word can so fully express all that Christ came to tell us about God. "For God so loved the world that He gave"; Christ so loved the world that He gave of Himself freely for all men. The husband so

loves his wife, his church and his God that he gives his wife all that he has of himself in a spirit of complete self-surrender. This is no lip service. The matter cannot be dismissed by giving property rights, making the bank account a matter of joint privilege, sharing a family name or vows before the altar. A lifetime of affection is implied. Love proceeds and follows the marriage ceremony. Marriage is of God, not man. The place, manner and minister are of human selection, but man is united by God, not the law. Love, therefore, is love only when the blessing of God is earnestly invoked and His love reigns in the heart of both before the betrothal.

Where this has been honestly done there can be no mis-marriage. How many times is the expression heard, "they are mismated; the glamor will soon wear off; they cannot stick it out; before long a separation will result"? Where love triumphs, and where love rules, death alone can separate and that only for a season. Love for God will reunite. Death merely gives the care of one into the keeping of God. In heaven there is neither marriage or remarriage. But we have every reason to believe love will continue. The intimate relation existing between Christ and the apostles did not terminate at the crucifixion or ascension. He loved them unto the end, and His love forever liveth and makes intercession for them.

Paul was in advance of his time when he told husbands to love their wives. The Greeks spoke of love, but usually love of a man for a man. A wife was cherished, but this relationship lacked that element of romance about which poets sung and for which the knights in the day of chivalry were willing to battle to the death, wearing a favor of their lady. Paul places this emotion far beyond a physical passion, or even above that noble love of a mother for her child. This latter love may be more physical than spiritual. An animal will die for its young as a mother will sacrifice herself for a child. During a severe storm a mother and child found it impossible to continue longer. The mother took her warm cloak, wrapped it about her child, baring her tender bosom to the wind and snow. Rescuers found her in the sleep of death with the child smiling and well.

Paul would have made love more noble even than this—it

must be God-like, free from lust, selfishness, conceit, narrowness, earthliness; love is lifted into heaven to avoid those tragic mistakes of a lower order which the novelist, the crooner, the dramatist speak of as being love—a temporary blossom which soon fades and falls to pieces like a full blossomed rose under the winds of suspicion, distrust, lack of confidence, cowardice and pure selfishness. Love must be God-like to stand like Gibraltar through all that lies ahead in the voyage of life. Love listens to reason, surrenders personal preferences, confides, shares, listens with open mind, withholds nothing, cooperates, prays over and never permits that bitter antagonism which leads to Reno and the divorce court. When marriage is in the Lord instead of being for money, position, family, a title or a matter of convenience, it will have that which makes God's love to us incapable of ever failing.

THE STANDARD OF A HUSBAND'S LOVE.

Even as Christ: Because He first loved us, and even as He loves us are we to love. How can such a love from a husband to a wife ever end in other than absolute happiness and joy? The hope of society is to appropriate such a love and pattern after it, giving in measure as they have capacity. A child plays upon the seashore and tries to catch some of the breaking wave in a shell. The shell does not hold much, but it can be filled with that which makes the sea a sea. A blade of grass cannot hold much of the deluge of a great storm, yet when the sun bursts through the breaking clouds a beam of light is reflected upon the clinging drop of water and causes it to glow like a diamond. That spot of brightness is not the sun, but without the sun it would be absent. No human being can love as bounteously as Christ, but we can love to the limit of our capacity. Christ was sinless, we are filled with sin; our love can never be as pure as His, it will be like foam-flecked water near the shore clouded with sand in contrast with the deep blue or green of mid-ocean. We can and must strive to have our love intense, self sacrificing, holy and pure. It will lack that infinite quality of having neither beginning nor end. Before the world was, God and Christ were. Our love begins with association; friendship and acquaintance ripens into marital love.

"Be ye therefore merciful even as our Father in heaven is merciful." This is love "not unto himself." No critic should sit in judgment on a husband and conclude that the head of the wife was an oppressor, was capricious, morose, selfish, self-indulgent, arbitrary, thoughtless, cruel, callous, or was ever a domestic tyrant. Divine love preserves, shields, saves and protects. It delights in the pleasure of the one loved. It lives beyond trivial circumstance, passing incident, and changing moods which fly like flitting shadows across the path of life. Divine love "even as Christ" never raises the point of supremacy, priority or other nominal legal claims. Christ the only begotten Son of God, left His home in heaven, lived among men, but girded Himself with a towel and washed the feet of the disciples. Love always ministers without question as to who is first or second. A task needs to be done. Its completion means life and happiness. Love ministers in the name of deep affection and in the name of Christ.

Marriage is a sacrament binding two precious souls together. No magistrate, priest or ceremony has united them. The law may prescribe rights, privileges and duties and place its protecting arm about each lest one or the other be unfaithful, but the law cannot bring love into the heart or place a barrier about it to prevent its escape. The law can never take the place of Christ. How futile is the law. How needless for it ever to express itself when love reigns, even as Christ.

Husbands, think of Christ and His love, follow through step by step, prayerfully, faithfully, constantly and guided by His Holy Spirit and there will not be much to regret except that hands, feet, lips and a life are poor instruments to convey what the heart feels and generates. "Even as Christ"—here is the motto. Day by day check up with this norm and make daily corrections. This is the secret of true and undiluted joy.

THE FACT OF CHRIST'S LOVE FOR THE CHURCH.

Also loved the church: As Christ loves the individual so He loves the collection of those loving hearts saved by His grace which comprise the church of God. No element of evil is here, no stain of guilt, no selfish purpose, no earthly emotion

saturated with lust. Christ loved the church before it was formed. While we were yet in sin, Christ loved us and gave Himself for us. "While in sin"—husband, has your wife fallen from grace? Turn not from her; love her as Christ loved the church, even unto the end. Be willing to die for your wife even as Christ died upon a cross of shame for sinful men. To many, a wife is but a servant to work for her husband. The ideal husband sees how much he can do for the wife, not how much she can do for him. Christ loved us and "gave himself for me (Gal. 2:20)." Christ "hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace (II Tim. 1:9)."

No wife has anything to fear from a husband who loves her as Christ loved the church. No barrier will ever rise between them. No problems prove beyond their ability to solve with divine help. As only Christ's love could have possibly selected, pardoned, purified and redeemed the church, so only a Christ-like husband's love can ever choose, preserve and cherish a true wife in the Lord. Christ's love is the pole star by which the home is steered. All love pales into insignificance when compared with His love. The light of the brightest moon pales when the sun rises over the horizon. Christ's love is a stream in the desert, a star in the night, a rainbow in the heavens, a shower in a parched Mohave desert. Without Christ's love neither the church nor the sinner to be saved by grace, nor human love can be what God intended it should be, when after creating Adam He made a helpmeet for him in the person of Eve. No program, scheme, method of instruction, course of lectures, can ever do for the family what Jesus does when He enters and takes His abode in the home. The Arctic circle can never be made a tropic by lighting a single candle or a million of them. Wastes of ice and snow cannot be transformed into waving prairies by installing an electric lighting system to flood the Arctic regions with light. The tropics are tropics because the sun shines upon them. A Christian basks in happiness, the beauty and fragrance of love and beauty, because the light of the Sun of Righteousness is shining in his heart.

THE PROOF OF CHRIST'S LOVE.

And gave himself for it: Jesus gave more than words, prayers, tears, heartaches, companionship, love, groans, and sympathy—He gave Himself in suffering which led to death upon the cross of shame. He gave all of Himself for the church which he loved and desired to save. He loved the church and wanted to die in order that it might be with Him in glory for ever and ever. So the husband is to give himself in completeness with absolute abandon for the spiritual welfare of his helpmeet. What advantage is there in showering luxuries about one that is dear only to be separated at death. This is not God's way. We are more than leaves on a tree to be dust to dust, ashes to ashes and earth to earth. The husband is custodian of the wife's soul.

Glance for a moment at the love of Christ for the church. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6)." "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8)." "He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people (Titus 2:14)."

The husband labors by unselfish and sacrificial service, caring sympathetically and lovingly until death do them part in memory of Christ's self-surrender. A continual companionship with both sharing this love will be an offering having a sweet savor unto God and man. Christ's love for the church is the height to which we are to climb as we protect and shield our loved one. Such love must be practice, and more than a mere outward, formal proper and public expression. The marriage ceremony has been greatly abbreviated in recent years. Contracting parties wish to have it over as soon as possible. Words are said, but how little they mean, how soon forgotten! "Wilt thou have this woman to be thy wife, and wilt thou pledge thy troth to her, in all love and honor, in all duty and service, in all faith and tenderness, to live with her, and cherish her, according to the ordinance of God, in the holy bond of marriage?" "I promise and covenant, before

God and these witnesses, to be thy loving and faithful husband, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, as long as we both shall live." The ideal Christian husband, the only Christian husband loves his wife as Christ loved the church which is his body.

XXVI.

THE IMMEDIATE PURPOSE OF CHRIST'S SACRIFICE

"That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." —EPH. 5:26.

THE EFFECT OF CHRIST'S SACRIFICE.

That he might sanctify it: The husband is to think of Christ's love for the church and to practice His spirit and character when he loved his wife. Christ's love has three tenses, past, present and future. The present tense is discussed here. Christ loves the church and has set it apart for the Father in heaven. His sacrifice upon the cross and His death was intended to consecrate those set apart to God and separate them from those who did not avail themselves of His atoning work. Having been cleansed of their sins by union with Himself, they are secure both now and for all eternity. Sin has been their master; now they are free from its power and dominion. It was necessary that the Lamb of God without blemish should be killed to accomplish this freedom. Christ first consecrated Himself to God, then He consecrated the church of the ages to God through His sacrifice. "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate (Heb. 13:12)." Sanctification is one of the first and most evident proofs of Christ's suffering, being appropriated by those whom He has redeemed. One difference between a pagan and a Christian lies in the sanctification of the believers in Jesus. "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God (I Cor. 6:11)."

The sinner must evidence a personal interest in and a personal appropriation of Christ's sacrifice for him. Mass baptism or dedication by multitudes does not save. Each must accept for himself or lose the benefit of his sanctification through the truth. For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they

also might be sanctified through the truth (John 17:19).” This sanctification may be twofold. First it is once and for all upon a sinner’s renunciation of his sins, his asking for forgiveness and giving of himself without reserve to his Savior. “Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5).” In another sense it is a daily and frequent occurrence. Whenever he is conscious of having fallen short of the glory of God, he comes seeking cleansing and rededicates himself to the cause and work of the Lord, to whom he belongs and for whom he lives.

ACCEPTED AS GUILTLESS.

And cleanse it: The present tense is used to describe taking away the stains, sins, guilt and faults of the church of God. Christ loved the church when it was not yet formed. He loves the sinner while still in his sin and stands entreating the heart to be opened to Him. Christ purifies a church which cannot cleanse itself. The sacrifice of Christ prepares the sinner for the presence of God by thoroughly cleansing every particle of guilt, and the consciousness of guilt. This cleansing process must precede sanctification. Some believe that consecration precedes cleansing, that a life must be set apart before a desire to be clean and a prayer for pardon can proceed from a sinful life. However, all will agree that cleansing and sanctification co-exist. It is impossible to have a filthy, foul, sin-filled, loathsome life and a sanctified life at the same time. A member of the church may say frequently, “Woe is me; I have sinned greatly in thy sight.” There may be a loathing of self, a mortification over the weakness of self, a feeling of shame that temptation enters the very gate of the temple but there will always be the unfailing purpose to cry out with David, “Cleanse me that I may be clean. Make me clean every whit. Wash me and I shall be clean. Create in me a clean heart, O Lord, and renew a right spirit within me.” The character of the cleansing offered by Jesus is brought out in John 13. “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me (John 13:8).” I Jno. 1:8 and 2:2 expresses the fact known to every disciple, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us . . . we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” And He is the propitiation for our

sins. This is the hope of every believing heart. God is pure. We can cry out, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts," but some day we shall be holy in His presence because of Jesus' work for His church. We are accepted because the Son has interceded for us. There is no distinction between men. The work of Jesus is for one and all. None can claim special privileges or nearness to the heart of the Master. He brings His gifts to the humblest home and to the great brown stone mansion. God's gifts shine like the sun upon the righteous and the unrighteous. Let us praise the giver. We can no more help receiving His mercies than we can prevent the sun from shining upon us. Let us lift up our voices to Him in praise.

SET APART.

With the washing of water: Is this cleansing to be with the water of baptism? Is there any other medium? Are the unbaptised unclean and lost? Is the rite in the mind of the writer or that for which the rite stands? This is the question. The Jews were very careful to present themselves clean in the temple. A laver of water had an important position in the furnishing of the temple and the order of worship of the synagogue. But here Paul is probably carrying out the thought of the church as the Bride of Christ. The bride was bathed as a part of her preparation for the marriage ceremony. Her cleansing was a type of the cleansing of the sinner by the power of the Holy Spirit before He becomes a part of the church which is the Bride of Christ. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin (I John 1:7)." "How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Heb. 9:14)?" The water of baptism is a visible symbol of this cleansing. It tells the sinner and the world that sins are washed away, the past is removed. To remain in the presence of Jesus we must be pure and clean. The sinner may come to Jesus as the leper with all his spots, but through faith they may go away with the flesh of a newborn babe. The form of this baptism is not important; the presence of the Spirit of God and its appropriation by the sinner is important. The place, the person performing the ceremony, the water used, the manner and the

age of the one baptized—all are important, but the spirit, cleansing of the heart, and the complete setting apart for the work of the Lord are vital. While no believer will hesitate to be baptised with water, he seeks baptism of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is one of the few rites reserved exclusively for the church. No other organization can appropriate this ceremony.

THE CLEANSING POWER OF THE WORD.

By the word: The preposition "in" is found in many manuscripts. Cleansing is attended or conditioned upon hearing the Word. How shall they hear without a preacher? The gospel is to be preached to every lost creature. The Word is God's cleansing and sanctifying Word plus the whole revealed and inspired Word of God. Confession of our faith in Christ brings us to and brings to us, the Word and will of God. We need all the Word for daily food. "Break Thou the Bread of Life, dear Lord, to me."

"The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart (Rom. 10:8)." "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17)"; "He upholds all things by the word of his power (Heb. 1:3)"; "We are to taste 'the good word of God (Heb. 5:5)'; 'The worlds were framed by the word of God (Heb. 11:3)'; 'The word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit (Heb. 4:12)'; 'Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth (John 17:17)'; 'Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you (John 16:3).' The Word is to be in the name of the 'Father, Son and Holy Ghost (Matt. 28:19).' There is no stated time when the Word is to exert its power. It is always ready to be received and applied by any desiring its cleansing power. 'Come unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.' No time is set apart for its application. The church is always a designated place where the Word by its preaching, teaching and power should be available for those who need its strength. Day and night, the Word is continuously and universally present to cleanse. Like a great eternal river it flows past our lives inviting us to plunge beneath its healing stream and be clean every whit.

Every one needs these three benefits of the church—washing, cleansing and sanctification. For some the three steps may be simultaneous, for others they may represent growths in grace and a passing from one to another as they advance from grace to grace. All are essential for entering the true church which is bought by the blood of the Lamb. Let us enter into the church as Christ intended we should enter. Such a church cannot fail to live up to His expectations; such a church cannot be impotent; such a church will be preaching the Gospel; such a church will be busy with the affairs of the kingdom; such a church will be seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; such a church will be bringing into the kingdom such as shall be saved. Christ died for a lost world. The church will live to bring a lost neighborhood and unsaved members of families into vital relationship with Jesus, the Savior of the world.

XXVII.

A GLORIOUS CHURCH

"That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such things but that it should be holy and without blemish." —EPH. 5:27.

CHRIST THE BRIDEGROOM.

That he might present it: The future tense is used to tell why He sacrificed His life for the church. He wishes to fit it for the presence of God. This is the aim of His love. As a bridegroom will welcome his loved one at the marriage feast, so Christ will welcome the cleansed church which is His Bride. One difference however is to be noted. Where the earthly bridegroom according to the customs of the time obtained his bride through a friendly intermediary who made all negotiations and arrangements and presented his choice to the bridegroom on the marriage day, Christ prepares His Bride for Himself and presents it to Himself with no one acting as an agent for Him. Christ is Himself the Redeemer and Preserver who has made the church ready for eternal relationship with Himself in glory. Christ has saved the people from their sins and guilt. As the bride of the earth is bathed and prepared for her lover, so Christ has washed, cleansed and sanctified His chosen people for Himself. In one sense Christ has cleansed the sinner from his ways, once and for all; in another sense, He is constantly and continually performing this cleansing act. The church grows throughout the ages. Christ's work will not be done until His Second Coming when the list of the church shall be complete. Each day the Son presents this loved church to His Father pleading for it with groanings which cannot be uttered.

A PRECIOUS GIFT.

To himself: Christ died for a guilty people who had broken God's law. Knowing the way, they walked not in it. With

eyes open and certain their sins would some day find them out, aware of the punishment awaiting for them they still departed from the straight and narrow way. But Christ knew their worth and intrinsic value. He knew what they might become, when cleansed from their sin and liberated from the power and dominion of the evil one. So He determined to save them and provide a way of escape. He would die on the cross. He would be lifted up in order that all who looked upon Him might have life. Their faith was to open the door to His precious gifts when they had been washed clean and made fit for the presence of God. He would present Himself with this gift for which such a price had been paid. This permanent relationship was introduced by the marriage feast. As a groom He would greet His chosen people and glorify them. When finally called, they were to be His forever. No one could ever pluck them from His hand.

A THING OF BEAUTY.

A glorious church: The church arrayed in all her glory will be presented to Him at a marriage feast in heaven. What a day that will be when we, a part of that church, "Shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is (I John 3:2)." We shall see Him who gave Himself for and to us. Holiness is part of this glory to be revealed. Holiness and glory are inseparable. Holiness necessitates cleansing. No sin can defile heaven. Someone has said, "Holiness is glory eternal; glory is holiness outwardly."

The church of Christ is glorious, whether on earth fighting the powers of evil with the sword of the Spirit, laboring to accomplish the will of God in itself and through itself, and taking up its cross daily to suffer with Him that it may eventually reign with Him; or whether in heaven freed from dross and cleansed from everything which defileth and maketh abomination; a church purified, refined with the fires of adversity and glorified with the glory which was with the only begotten Son of God. Both churches will reflect the glory of God and both will be glorified by the Son.

This church will be glorious because of its membership. It is glorious to behold a single life saved from sin and degradation, but when the redeemed of all ages are gathered, what a

glorious company they will make! A single candle in the night brings comfort and beauty, but when every window of every house is aglow with many candles, when their flicking light beams forth their accumulated brightness, how glorious is their light. A single daisy is beautiful. Every petal possesses differing beauty. Pollen adds contrast and charm. But when this flower is multiplied by fields and acres of wide stretches of nodding windblown masses of daisies, what a glorious sight! To have saved John B. Gough from his drunkenness was a marvel of redemption, but to have saved millions of all ages who have confessed Christ as their Lord, to have saved me—even me; to want me, to have a place prepared for me; to have gone before to be waiting for me; to gather by trumpet call the dead from their graves in the earth and seas, what glory! When these whose robes are washed white shall sing praises to God about the throne of glory, this will be glory indeed. "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him (Mal. 3:17)." "For the Lord's portion is his people (Deut. 32:9)." "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them: that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them and thou in me, that they may be perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me (John 17:22, 23)."

This church is glorious in its foundation. It was created by the will of God for, but not by man's necessities. It is glorious in its history of persecution, martyrdom, and victory over the wrecks of time. The Cross of Christ has triumphed over all powers. It is glorious in its power to change lives which by the grace of God have broken off from former habits of sin, selfishness and self-destruction. It is glorious in its vast wide-flung enterprises covering every section of the globe; glorious in its great cathedrals and churches of all time, mighty in numbers, abounding in wealth, irresistible in purpose. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" It is a church glorious because of its holiness and purity. None other possesses such power or calls to such high living. The church communes with God; it walks with Him, it lives for Him. We are His people and He is our God.

RESULT OF CHRIST'S CLEANSING.

Not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing: We catch a glimpse of the home of God to bring our homes into conformity with this heavenly pattern. Every small detail of our conduct and life must be brought into subjection to Christ. We must give ourselves every whit unto Him, lest we be spots. "Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings (II Pet. 2:13)." The moral state of the heathen is spoken of as being a spot and blemish (Eph. 2:1-5; 4:17). The church is not all clean. Both tares and wheat appear. On the Judgment Day the wheat shall be separated from the tares. Many are driven from the church because of these tares in the field and these wolves in sheep's clothing. Let us not stay away from the church because of its impurities but rather be pure ourselves and keep ourselves unspotted from the world.

A perfect garment is unspotted. A spot is apt to be the most fascinating and conspicuous part of a garment; a spot will linger in the mind long after the cleanliness of the garment is forgotten. Friends seem to be forever looking for spots. Such a search mortifies us and proves to be a thorn in the flesh. Conscience says, "Get rid of spots." We pray for freedom and cleansing from spots of memory and conduct. There will be no spots in heaven. The church will be clean every whit. No wrinkles, sign of age, care, weakness or lack of proper nourishment will appear in glory. The church will be a healthy church, nourished by the bread of His Word, and will show no sign of decay. God is endless in time; we shall be eternal and immortal and put on that which is incorruptible. Failures of this world will be forgotten then. Blemishes of character disappear. Sin leaves its earthly mark. The sins of a father descend to the children of the third and fourth generation of them that are careless toward God and His law, but in heaven these scars of the soul will be removed. Whether we retain the scars of the earthly body in our spiritual body is unimportant. The scars of Christ's side, hands and feet were seen in His spiritualized body. What does a scar matter if we are with Him for ever and ever? This is all that matters. We shall recognize each other. Clothed in righteous-

ness, granted the spirit of ageless existence, and being perfect even as the Father in heaven is perfect, will be glory indeed.

HOLY FAULTLESSNESS.

But that it should be holy and without blemish: No qualification appeared here. We are to be holy in every respect. Every part of our heart, mind and will is to be clean. He sanctifies us completely. We consecrate ourselves completely to Him. He will "present you holy and unblameable and un-reproveable in His sight (Col. 1:22)" who is (Ex. 15:11) "glorious in holiness." Sin separates us from God. The forgiven soul has removed that which causes his acts to be distasteful to God. The church will be holy in its final and ultimate condition.

The redeemed church will be without blame or blemish. This cannot be said of the church now. It is filled with what must be displeasing to God. So many elements obscure the glory of God. The arguments, petty attitudes, faulty living, worldly ideals, fragmentary gospel which is being preached in the name of the Holy Word of God must pain the Lord. Some day the church will be without spot, holy and perfect in all conditions and possessing a spiritual beauty. When the Bridegroom comes, the Bride shall be presented without spot. "The angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just; and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 13:49, 50)." Now both good and evil dwell together, but then only good remains. Pray that (Phil. 2:15) "we may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." Christ has offered Himself without spot to God that we might (Heb. 9:14) "purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." We shall be without blemish because (I Pet. 1:19) we have been redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Let us give ourselves completely, humbly and persistently, (Jude 24) "unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." Then it shall be

said of us (Rev. 14:5), "And in their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God."

Christ died for the ungodly. He died for me. I am a part of this glorious picture. Only a stubborn will can keep me out of the picture. Only the closing of my heart to his pleadings can separate me from the love of Christ Jesus. Today is the day of salvation; now is the accepted time. Come to the Savior now that He may begin that work in you which shall lead to glorification and eternal dwelling in His presence for ever and for ever.

XXVIII.

THE REASON FOR A HUSBAND'S LOVE

"So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself." —EPH. 5:28.

THE GROUND OF LOVE.

So ought men to love their wives: Our love is to be Christ-like in every respect. Nothing less will satisfy the demands of a Creator. As Christ gave Himself completely for the church which is His Bride, so the husband must spare nothing for the one whom he has promised to love, cherish and obey until death do them part. Christ loves to save the church which is dear to His heart; the husband loves to save the wife who has been entrusted to his care; save her from worry and physical want; provide for all temporal necessities but particularly be primarily interested in being sure her soul has been definitely saved for all eternity. This standard is God-given—nothing less will satisfy. This life is not the end; it but prepares for what lies beyond. The husband is definitely related to this future. He is in a position to do more than any one else. By discussion and choosing the ideals of the home, he has the responsibility of shaping the destinies of his household. He is head of the house for more than to have some one to exercise authority over; a husband insists upon living within income, having meals on time, neatness in the home and sharing of responsibilities; he should also insist upon household devotions, and worship of God, the Giver and Creator of the wife he cherishes. How can he love his wife as he should and escape or avoid this higher duty? Being faithful in the lesser, he should also be true in the greater.

This verse implies that love will be confined to his own wife and not the wife of another. As the years progress, it is quite likely imperfections will be apparent in both. This does not give permission to become attached to or support another,

or be more gracious to another with whom there seems to be greater apparent compatability. When the marriage relation comes to be considered as a bond till death, there will be fewer divorces and more prayerful, loving effort to harmonize differences, forgive mistakes, forget the past and begin anew. When the sun is not allowed to go down upon an unforgiven error, it is surprising how brightly love will burn and how ineffective other siren voices are in attempting to lure partners from neighboring folds. Winning or stealing the affections of another man's wife is a social crime akin to murder. It is living torture to see one dearly loved grow cold, careless, petulant, irritable, and indifferent and have the anguish of mind which watches a growing gulf between the home and its principals.

The husband is to love the wife who has put her best foot forward and then relaxed to her true self. The husband is to love the wife who has stopped growing. The husband is to love the wife who has gone astray and sinned. The husband is to love his wife as God loves the sinner; to love her as he expects the love of a gracious Father to follow him all his days, forgive his mistakes and hold not past sins against him; he must forgive his wife even though she does not seek it; he is to lovingly, tenderly, persistently, tactfully, manfully woo her back to him, and hold her by the power of his love and his prayers until she realizes the error of her ways and returns to be true. It is always easier to light a piece of charcoal than a piece of fresh wood. The stick which has once burned burns easiest. The heart which has once responded to love can respond again when taken away from that which has caused the glamor.

It is quite possible for blame to be on both sides. The husband may have become too absorbed in his business or pleasure; he may have hidden his affairs from the eyes of a loving wife, he may have allowed personal pleasure to take what should have gone into a new hat or a new dress. She may have waited alone for him long and faithfully, and in desperation sought diversion from some other source. She may have sensed insincerity and other absorptions and painfully felt she was no longer first in his earthly affections.

Before a husband becomes too critical it would be well for him to place himself upon the mat for inspection, get down upon his knees and ask God to show him if he has been true to his professed love, then rise and in a straightforward way tell his wife of this purpose to bring back the glory of the honeymoon with the help of God. Jesus' love had no worldly dilutions. Being without sin, His love is clear as crystal. Our love is impure. The temptations of the world, carelessness, laxities, unintentional diversions, all lead husbands into paths away from their God and their wife. If we walk in the light as He is in the light there will be little danger of wives' walking in different paths. This implies Christlikeness. A husband cannot compel or buy his way into reinstatement. He must love his way back into the heart. There is no other way.

THE WIFE IS HIS BODY.

As their own bodies: Christ loved the church because it was part of His own body. He was the head, but true believers were the body—under the head, yet vitally related in every way. Separation meant death. In a similar manner the wife is a part of the same body as her husband. He is the head, but she is his body, intimately related to him. Her life is his life. The head cannot live without the body, the body cannot live without the head. Separate either from the other and there is death. Husbands, love your wives as your own body, which she really is. Care for her as persistently as you would maintain the health and appearance of your own body. "As" is not comparative as much as argumentative. His love for his body is to be equalled by his love for her—and his love for her is to be based upon the fact that she is his body, "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh (Gen. 2:23)." Eve "was taken out of Adam." Her condition has been used to describe the condition of women everywhere, as separate in substance and in direction. Each has the ability to possess self-determination. Marriage is not essential for eternal happiness. In heaven "we are neither married nor given in marriage." Marriage is of the earth. Its divine purpose is far more than to bring temporary happiness or children. Marriage related to the kingdom of heaven provides careful per-

sonal supervision, maintains Christian virtues, and keeps the commandments of God.

The home is a place for getting a clean start for the day; it is a place for rest and recuperation; it supplies the spirit with which we go out into the world; it provides spiritual poise. When out of balance we come into the home to obtain courage to enable us to face our task calmly and unafraid. The home has vital daily spiritual functions. The church is apt to contact the most faithful but one day in seven. The home has daily contact. Hence the necessity for a spiritual perspective on the part of each individual in the home. Husbands, love your wife as your own bodies and as Christ loves the church which is His body. Be as solicitous, as patient, as quick to check disease, as careful of food, rest, recreation and health in every respect.

Husbands and wives compliment each other. The perfections of the one fill out the imperfections of the other. Where one is weak the other is apt to be strong. The deficiency of one is apt to be the abundance of the other. The scales balance. Therefore, if one does not quite reach expectations, do not despair but prayerfully seek a levelling off—a process not always pleasant. The excellence of the one will bring the admiration and respect which feeds love. The life of both unites into a common stream. The body has many functions. The muscular construction of the hand is not that of the head. A bruise on the finger may necessitate different treatment from one on the head but health must be maintained if life is to persist.

Marriage has been defined as a union between man and woman which has been freely obligated and is mutually complimentary. The relationship is sanctioned and to a certain point controlled by the state, but it is actually made by God and dissolved only by death, adultery or desertion. The husband and wife are part and parcel of each other.

COMMUNITY OF INTERESTS.

He that loveth his wife loveth himself: Carrying the point a bit further, a man loves himself in loving his wife. This is not egotism. It lacks those disagreeable traits we frequently find in self love. The comparison does not imply an absorp-

tion in self-esteem which leads to arrogant boasting and a disdain of the abilities of others. Love for one's own wife—not the wife of another—is self-interest. Love is like water to a plant; the better a plant is tended the larger it grows, the more beautiful it is and the greater pleasure it gives to those who behold it. The husband who cherishes his wife second only to his love for God, who watches her interests and tends her carefully, will be rewarded by love in return and beauty which never fades. Grey hair, wrinkles and slowing down in physical activity cannot detract from the desirableness of those whose love never grows old. They drink from a fountain of perpetual youth, fed from eternal springs coming from the heart of God. God loves both wife and husband. Both were intended to be living stones in the temple not made with hands. They may be adjacent stones in this temple, and being side by side they may desire to be as beautiful and perfect as can be. A perfect stone ill becomes a blemished setting. A magnificent stone is mistreated when a discolored stone stains and ruins its beauty. A solicitous husband cares for the wife to present her in heaven a stone which the builder will not reject because of imperfection. In Gen. 2:21-24, we have a description of the creation of Eve and the formation of that relationship whereby a man shall "leave his father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Matthew (19:4-6) adds, "What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." A man cannot hate his wife any more than he can hate his own flesh. His love must be sinless and natural. He cares for his wife as himself. God cannot be omitted from either the creation of the first man and woman or the marriage relation. God gave Eve to Adam. God is still giving wives to husbands. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

XXIX.

THE ONENESS OF HUSBAND AND WIFE

"For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church."—EPH. 5:29.

FURTHERING SELF-INTEREST.

For no man ever yet hated his own flesh: We all love ourselves to a certain extent. Normal men or women in their right senses never hated themselves, however deformed or imperfect they might be. Evidence of hatred of body have been seen in mental derangement or forms of insanity, but these are abnormal. Some in an abundance of religious zeal and desire to be of another world have crucified the flesh and the things of the flesh, but this is exceptional and contrary to general practice and the scripture. We may not be satisfied with our body; we may wish greater activity, poise, proficiency, grace, comeliness, strength, health, capacity and endurance, but we cherish what we have to the best of our ability and endeavor to maintain its continuance by advice, medicine, care and solicitous interest. To hate our body would be to mutilate it and cause its early weakness, disease and death. "The merciful man doeth good to his own soul (Prov. 11:17)." "The fool foldeth his hands together, and eateth his own flesh (Ecc. 4:5)."

The husband and wife are one flesh. There must be no internal war between them. To hate one's wife is to hate his own flesh, to love his wife is to love his own flesh. Self-interest compels the most tender, solicitous care for that which the Lord has given. He owes it to himself, the church and the community in general as well as his fulfilling of the purpose for which he was placed in the world not to hate his own body or the body of his wife which is a part of his own. The same consideration is due both.

"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and

mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:26)." This hatred of his life is not a warning against selfish appropriation of talents, time, wealth and opportunity. The Lord, Creator, has prior claim upon us. We are to lose our life to find and save it. The individual and home should be wholly dedicated to the cause of Jesus. No home completely dedicated to God has ever been the loser because of it. The husband and wife are joint partners; co-workers with God and for God. The urgency and importance of their task demands reverence and affection for the body given them by the Creator. This must be kept in the highest state of efficiency until the Giver of life sees fit, in His infinite wisdom, to place an end to the days which He has given.

TENDER AND SOLICITOUS CARE.

But nourisheth and cherisheth it: Instead of hating, despising, ignoring or submerging his body or his wife's body, he cherishes and nourishes it to the best of his ability, knowledge and opportunity. These words have a different shade of meaning. Nourishing includes that careful, continuous providing of food to sustain the inward body which brings it constantly to that state of health and maturity which will eventually lead to its highest possible state of development. Cherishing, by derivation, refers rather to external covering of the body, to cleansing, and to protection against the elements, infection and danger of all sorts. Nourishing includes the process of training which a parent gives a child; cherishing suggests a mother's sheltering and warming of her child close to her bosom, careful study of its well being in all phases and application of all that will produce and continue health. "Even as a nurse cherisheth her children (I Thess. 2:7)." "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof (Rom. 13:14)." Man is to care for his body with the greatest devotion, tenderness and industry as being the greatest work of God and the tool used by God to advance His kingdom. We are the lights of God; lamps in a world of darkness and lighthouses on dangerous coasts. Let us tend that life with the same diligence as a keeper of a lighthouse, a radio-beacon, a channel-light, the lamps of a

hospital, the light of an operating room or the landing light of a transport plane. Care for a body becomes a sin only when that body is used for other than the work of God. The Greeks magnified the importance of a perfect body as an end in itself. They sought beauty. We are to seek efficiency for the sake of God's work. Jesus tells us as He told Peter, "Feed my lambs." This requires food, attention, responsibility, and accounting of a stewardship. The relation of a man and his wife is comparable to the relation of a man to his own body and flesh, and the relation of Christ to His church.

CHRIST'S LOVING CARE FOR THE CHURCH.

Even as the Lord the church: We are to constantly recall the relation of the church as the bride of Christ and the wife as the bride of her husband. The church in its inception, maintenance, ideals and work is related directly to Christ. Christ preserves and furthers the purity of the church as a husband gives constant and serious thought to the work of keeping his wife healthy and fit in every respect. Christ loves the church; He gave Himself for it, He sanctified it, He cleanses it, He presents it to Himself a glorious church having neither spot nor wrinkle, He nourishes it and cherishes it. These seven things He does for the church. The Song of Solomon pictures Christ as an adoring lover conversing with His love and telling her how precious she is. Is this not a true representation of the husband? Loving, tender words do not confine themselves to days of spring, moonlight nights, romantic spots and occasions; honeymoons are to continue throughout life. How many silently starve for the familiar phrases of their engagement days! Husbands unintentionally or carelessly starve the hearts of their wives. No amount of food, comfort and provision can displace the words of the heart. The refrain of undying love never becomes old or commonplace from sincere lips. Words are meaningless if shared promiscuously. Their message is tender when limited to the one and only wife given of the Lord.

Exodus 21:10 gives three duties of a husband—"her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish." Christ gives spiritual food, "I am the bread of life"; He

provides the church raiment, "Put ye on therefore the whole armour of God." We are to be clothed with humility, forgiveness, charity, temperance, longsuffering, love and all Christian virtues. As we confess Him before men, unite with His church, and know Him by daily communion with Him, we as a part of the church live in relationship of a bride to Christ. "And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies. And I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the Lord (Hos. 2:19, 20)." Christ nourishes and cherishes the church, furnishing it with everything needful to its comfort, happiness and salvation. Christ died to save the church. Nothing less will satisfy Christ or the church. His supply includes all things needful and good for her spiritual maintenance and life. "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, and he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young (Isa. 40:11)." "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how oft would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not (Matt. 23:37)." "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die . . . he that eateth this bread shall live forever (John 6:50-58)."

A Christ who loved the church enough to leave His home in heaven, to endure the hardships of an earthly existence, and to suffer and die on the Cross, loves it enough to constantly give it loving supervision, the guidance of the Holy Spirit and anything needful. A man who loves his wife enough to choose her from among all women and marry her must also maintain this love all her days and be as faithful and exclusive in his affections as Christ is to the church. There can never be any question about the future happiness and continuance of a home saturated by Christ's love. The home which lives for Christ will be a united, blessed home. The divorce court will never have an opportunity to reach into a Christian home. Get right with God and wife and husband will get right with each other

and stay in that relationship. All sorts of bargains, agreements and second chances may be given, but unless God is in them, unless lives are pledged to Him for all eternity, the bond will not hold for any period of time. "Even as the Lord" is the standard of earthly affections and human loves. Keep your eye upon the mark and advance and progress. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect."

XXX.

MEMBERS OF HIS BODY

"For we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones."
—EPH. 5:30.

WHY CHRIST DEALS WITH THE CHURCH.

For we are members: This is the reason for Christ's interest in the church. Christ's love cannot be explained. Its origin is a mystery. Love existed when there was nothing lovely to attract. Usually love springs from the beautiful, charming and noble. Love is drawn to that which is appealing. The sinner was and is the object of Christ's love. "Assuming the existence of the church, the calling of sinners to union with Christ through faith," remarks McPherson, "Paul shows why toward them, in the church, Christ shows such love, and for them makes such ample provision." Because we are members of the believing church and part of His body, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies.

We are all members of one body in Christ, having different functions and talents, called to do different work, yet working for Him and in Him as an intimate part of His body. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another (Rom. 12:4, 5)." In I Cor. 11:3-13 we are given a more detailed picture of the relationship between wives and husbands as parts of the church which is the living body of Christ. We are as closely related to Christ as a finger is to a hand and the hand is to the arm, and the arm to the head. When we suffer, He suffers. He is acquainted with our griefs and knows our sorrows. Our sins pain and distress Him. The arm sympathetically suffers when a finger is swollen. As members of His body, we have an obligation to keep ourselves well and fit to do the work intrusted to us and do the work for which we

were created. The church cannot prosper if through indifference, laxness, failure to have the Spirit of Christ, living with the world, individual members fail to live up to their high calling in Him. Let us never forget whose we are and whom we serve. We are lights upon a hill to shine continuously.

Nominal Christians are a great hindrance to the cause of Christ. He needs those who are out and out for Him in every respect, those willing to take up their cross daily and follow Him to the end. Christians are needed who will live dangerously for Him. We are members of His body and as such must do as Christ did during His earthly ministry. Christ is not being treated a bit differently, today, than during His days in Palestine. As members of His body we are to receive abuse, we are to go on preaching missions, we are to show sinners the Father, we must teach others how to pray, in the name of Christ we are to lead the lost to repentance. We give evidence of being members of His body by baptism, celebration of Holy Communion and obedience to His laws. When we give tithes to the kingdom with a willing and joyful heart, consecrate ourselves to live for our Lord, separate ourselves from the world and the things of the world, we are living witnesses of the saving power of Christ, and those who know us are to ask themselves the question, "What shall I do to be saved?" Practically, we are members of His Body; spiritually we are also members of His Body. Our hearts are knit with His. He is the vine, we are the branches. We cannot bear fruit apart from Him. He cannot do His work apart from us. We are His hands and feet. As He sent the disciples two by two to preach the gospel to every creature, so He is sending us into the uttermost parts of the world. Christ needed abundant health and vigor to perform the tasks given Him; He needs the same health today. Spiritually are we assets or liabilities? Are we sore fingers or useful hands of the body of Christ?

WHAT A SACRED PRIVILEGE!

Of his body: He is the head of this body. We have proven our inability to be head. In what a sorry plight the church

would be if man, unaided by the Spirit of God, were to be directly and entirely responsible for the maintenance of the church! That body would be in perpetual war between hands or feet or lips or eyes. All parts of the body must be under direction of the head which operates for the safety and good of the body as a whole. Each member is to serve, protect and come to the assistance of the other.. As members of His body this is our spiritual function. We are part and parcel of Him. Are we as forgiving as He, as loving, as merciful, as patient, as longsuffering, as silent, as closely in harmony with the Father, as prayerful, as clear in our conception of life, as determined to carry out that purpose? We are members of His body through faith in Him and acceptance of His plan of salvation. By the Word we become ingrafted into Him. We are dependent upon Him in all things, not daring to assume authority, or advance without asking His counsel and guidance. Our duty is to love, reverence and obey Him. We are to hold ourselves as ambassadors of the King. A foreign ambassador can never forget his office. A soldier is ever conscious of the uniform he wears. What does our membership in the church keep us from and compel us to do? "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them members of an harlot? God forbid (I Cor. 6:15)!" "Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular (I Cor. 12:27)."

CHRIST AND THE BELIEVER ARE ONE.

Of his flesh: One version translates "out of" His flesh. We are not part of the flesh of Christ as Eve was a part of the flesh of Adam, being taken out of his body. But our true spiritual life and being comes from Him who was the second Adam. As the Bride of Christ we, the members of the church invisible, are a product of our Lord's existence. The love of Christ is life-blood flowing through Him to us. Flesh cannot live unless blood vessels constantly supply new, fresh and healthy blood. A constant repairing of broken down cell structure is incessantly going on. A steady stream goes to the heart for purification and returns from the heart purified. Nature is never idle day or night. As parts of the flesh of

Christ we possess all power which was His. Nothing is lacking. Failure to appropriate Him is not His fault but ours. It is possible by cutting off the stream of blood in a finger to close veins and produce a state of death. Sin closes the passage and communicating channel between Christ and ourselves. This must be kept open. Jesus must have His way with us. Relax in the hand of the Master. Christ continues to do the will of the Father in heaven. Let us continue to do the will of Him who sent us.

INSEPARABLY UNITED.

And of his bones: Genesis 2:21-23 describes the creation of Eve: And Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." As Adam said of Eve, so Christ says of us we are bone of his bones. The church is identified with Christ who is its origin. The sleep of Adam, during which Eve was formed, is an emblem of Christ's sleep of death in the tomb after which the church was created. His body was broken for us. Is it asking too much of us to suffer for Him? He gives us the right to be heirs with God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. Shall we be unwilling to watch with Him one hour or deny ourselves the gratification of worldly pleasures in order to learn of Him? When one sees the lax attendance of church members and their unwillingness to do the work of the church, one wonders how the church can be other than anemic. The blood count of the church is too low to supply enough energy to be moving about the Master's business with very great exertion. The lethargy of the church is due to an invasion of sin's forces; we need infusions and transfusions of the blood of Jesus to cleanse us from all sin, to give us the color of health and the ability to be up and doing for our Lord. The fields are white for the harvest, but the laborers are few. How can countless thousands hear until they have a preacher? Unless this generation learns the Gospel of Jesus how can it be saved?

XXXI.

A SPIRITUAL MARRIAGE

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."
—EPH. 5:31.

LOVE DIRECTS.

For this cause shall a man: Marriage has legal and spiritual relationships. A husband and wife possess a new dignity, repose, maturity and honor when they are united in the holy ties of matrimony. The mutual sympathy, sharing of responsibility and common life inspired by a deep and enduring love bind them close together and keep them nearer to each other than to any other person on earth. "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife (Gen. 2:24)." This looks forward to the relationship which was to exist between Jesus and the church, His bride. The Man of men and Adam have functions comparative in kind but not in quality. Eve was taken out of the side of Adam so, spiritually, the church was taken out of Christ. Paul would have every husband not only realize the highest possible attitude towards the wife given him by the Giver of all gifts, but also see in this relationship a type of God and His union with believers. Marriage is a sacred union and a sacred bond. God cannot be left out of the wedding ceremony. How many make marriage a matter of civil convenience or perfunctory religious recognition; going to a minister is more a matter of convention than recognition of God. God gave woman to man. God is the Creator of both. God instituted the relationship. This clause was undoubtedly written not to refer back to verse twenty-eight which reminds

husbands to love their own wives as their own bodies because they are a part of their own bodies, but rather to remind them of spiritual elements frequently forgotten or unknown.

LEAVING THE NEST.

Leave his father and mother: The parent feels very much forsaken when son or daughter establish their own homes and become absorbed in their new interests to the apparent oblivion of former attachments. It is hard for them to appear to take second place. It is rarely that. Love for a parent and a helpmate are quite different in character. One does not displace the other. Both wife and husband leave father and mother, but the husband, because of greater independence and responsibility becomes for a while so occupied in the new home as to unconsciously be consumed almost to the point of exclusion of those who have nourished him. The wife with greater home responsibilities is apt to cling more tenaciously to home ties and seek advice and cooperation from parents. As the husband leaves his father and mother for his wife, so the believer leaves the world for Christ. This concentration upon new responsibilities does not lessen honor or the duty to provide for the physical welfare of the parents as long as occasion arises. Too many take these words literally, and having obtained all that is possible from the parents, ignore them and allow them to receive a dole from the state or be subject to charity from other sources instead of sustaining them until their days on earth are ended. The Scriptures do not justify such an attitude. The man leaves his old home to form a new one with his wife, as Christ left His heavenly home to form a union with the church which is His Bride. The relationship between husband and wife is more intimate and important than that between parent and child. This is a law of life which should be recognized by both parent and child. The life of Christ, the Incarnate Son of God who died on the Cross, rose from the dead and lives forever to make intercession for His own, cannot be parallel with the life of a husband. The point of emphasis is separation, dedication, sac-

rifice and seeking the Father's guidance for the sake of the one loved.

Christ illustrated this attitude when (Luke 2:48, 49) He turned to His frantic mother who had found her lost boy and speaks "wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Later when mother and brothers seek Him who is busily engaged, Jesus reminds them of His higher responsibility, "My mother and my brethren are they which hear the word of God and do it." A woman bursting with enthusiasm over Jesus praises the blessed mother of the Son of God. Jesus' answer was somewhat disconcerting, "Thy mother . . . yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it."

VITAL RELATIONSHIP.

And shall be joined unto his wife: "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit (I Cor. 6:17)." "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready (Rev. 19:7)." Man is to cherish, love and nourish the woman as Christ does the church. This is always true in true love. How far will a true lover go to see his beloved for a few moments or days. Some have circumnavigated the globe for this brief glance. Christ said of His believers, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." Separation and life are impossible. You can separate a ripened seed from its parent and both seed and parent will live, but a branch and trunk cannot be separated and both live. A grafting process takes place in the union of husband and wife. Life flows from one to the other through Christ. His Holy Spirit fills them and keeps love alive. Their own spirit fails permanently to maintain the home in sweetness. Too much filth is thrown into the fountain. Before marriage is the time to realize the seriousness and permanence of the wedding band. Parents have a duty to explain marriage obligations to their children. The pulpit should explain God's purpose and the method of establishing a family in the Lord. God should be joined to husband and wife as the husband is united to his wife.

A PERFECT UNION.

And they two shall be one flesh: As Christ and the true church are inseparable, so are the major participants in the home (I Cor. 6:16). As Christ and the church are one so husband and the wife are one, inseparable in interest, purpose and loyalty. A house divided against itself cannot stand. Husband and wife together constitute one perfect human being. It takes two parts to make one. Each complements the other, supplying what the other lacks. Christ's fidelity to the church is as constant as the polestar or the law of gravity. No shortcoming of one member of the home should sour or turn one against the other; let both be as faithful to each other through thick and thin, plenty and want, sickness and health as Christ is true to the church. What would happen if Christ were otherwise to the sinner? How would sinners ever become saints or earth be forsaken for heaven? The husband stands in the same constant relationship to his wife. A Christ-like husband cherishes his wife as in the Lord. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." This is the secret of a happy, long married life. Honor thy God that thy married years may be filled with happiness and length of days. Let nothing ever separate one from the other. Let not the wrath within thy heart be ever carried beyond the setting sun into a new day. "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh (Matt. 19:6)"; "No man shall be able to pluck them out of my Father's hand (John 10:29)"; "Having loved his own he loved them unto the end (John 13:1)."

An old proverb is quite fitting here. "A good wife should be like three things which three things she should not be like. 1. She should be like a snail, to keep within her house, but she shall not be like the snail to carry all she has upon her back. 2. She should be like an echo, to speak when spoken to, but she should not be like an echo, always to have the last word. 3. She should be like the town clock, always to keep time and regularity, but she should not be like a town clock, speaking so loud all the town may hear her."

The husband and wife are to be one flesh in the Lord,

looking unto Him who is the author and finisher of our faith for guidance, inspiration, and the power to stay true to the ideals in the mind of God when He created the Garden of Eden and placed man and woman in it to dress it and to prepare themselves for eternal residence with Him in heaven. Let us consider our earthly home as a training school for heaven, so when we graduate from earth to heaven it may be with a diploma and *magna cum laude*. Study to show thyself a workman approved unto God, that needeth not to be ashamed."

XXXII.

MARRIAGE SACRED AND INDISSOLUBLE

"This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church."
—EPH. 5:32.

DO NOT EVADE.

This is a great mystery: Marriage is a type of Christ's relation to His church. These relationships are holy and beyond comprehension. By mystery we do not mean something hidden and never to be revealed; rather a great spiritual truth which was once hidden but is now revealed. The church was heralded throughout the ages. Its date of inception, its character and manner of operation and its headship were not revealed until the fullness of time. The church could not be discovered by looking for it. It was not present but waiting to be a real institution by reorganization and leadership. No one could arrive by induction at its necessity or affirm the need of supplanting the old synagogue as an institution which had lived its day. The church followed Christ as naturally as Christ followed the period of dim sight and insight into the things of God. The foundation and corner stone for the erection of the church was a natural and inevitable consequence.

The church and its power have always been as great a mystery as was Christ. Many books have been written—many more will be written—upon this theme. None can explain, account completely for, or describe the work and ministry of the church. The same spirit which cried, "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" will also cry "What is man that his finite wisdom should enter into the fulness of the Godhead which knows all, is everywhere, and has all power?" Man has such a limited vision. Why should the church be the heritage of the Gentiles who were outcast during the ascendancy of the Jews? Why should the church of today be largely composed of Gentiles when Christ, its Founder, was a Jew? A thousand

and one questions come, but the answer will still be a mystery. We can only cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." The more we consider the more our amazement. How can holiness be produced by faith in Christ or acceptance of Him as our personal Savior? How can God forgive sins for a simple request from one so greatly indebted to Him? This is a mystery.

The Bible speaks of many mysteries. Matt. 13:1-52 gives seven mysteries of the kingdom of heaven: 1. The Sower; 2. Tares in Wheat; 3. Grain of Mustard Seed; 4. Leaven; 5. Hidden Treasure; 6. The Pearl; 7. The Dragnet. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed (I Cor. 15:51)." There is the mystery of the seven stars (Rev. 1:20). There is the mystery of the woman and the beast that carried her (Rev. 17:7). The foolishness of preaching is also a mystery. The operation of the Spirit of God in answering the prayers of a believing soul is a mystery; the effecting of the conversion of a sinner on the other side of the world, who is not aware that anyone is praying for the salvation of his soul is a mystery. God's way with man is a mystery. His way of telling us of His love, our conviction that God speaks to us and our willingness to stake our all upon this knowledge, confident of the outcome, is a mystery beyond all comprehension.

Because this is a mystery we are not to shrink from it or cease to use it. The church invites the world to come and be a part of it. We use the radio, though we may not know the first thing about it. Many drive cars who only know a car needs water, oil and gas and has brakes and a steering wheel. Many accidents are caused by this ignorance; more accidents and suffering are caused by wilful ignorance of the things of God. The church stands ready to give itself and the Bible as a guide-book to such understanding. Yet how few take the trouble to learn much of what it is all about! Many enter into the marriage relationship as ignorant of the duties of husband and wife. They love each other; their property rights and their various spiritual and moral interests do not concern them in the least. No wonder so many marital accidents occur and divorces are frequent. You have to know a lot about motors and navigation to make a solo flight across

the Atlantic." Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face." What a glorious day that will be when we know as we are known; when we can see the reason for a lot which has seemed such a mystery! We have so many "why's" in our Christian experience. These will all be made clear some day. Praise His name! "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him (Ps. 25:14)." "Those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law (Deut. 29:29)."

THE GREATNESS OF THE MYSTERY.

But I speak concerning Christ: The mystery of the Gospel is not like those of Oriental magicians who appear to do a lot which is merely a trick of the hand or an illusion for the eye. Bible mysteries are not fakes, but realities beyond the comprehension of the childlike mind of men. A child sits in awe before the flying fingers of a master musician who, with no score before him plays a great symphony. The child who has trouble with more scales and the succession of notes wonders how the musician can perform so masterfully. Later musical training reveals the secret of this mystery. We shall learn in heaven the mystery of Christ, His love for the world and the church which is His bride. We can acknowledge facts and apply facts to ourselves. We are a part of the body of Christ. We can yield ourselves until, having put on immortality, we have entered into that spiritual appropriation of the kingdom of heaven, which shall endure throughout the ages of eternity.

The union of Adam and Eve was simple; the marriage of the Lamb of God is complex and mysterious. We can understand Mark 10:6, "From the beginning of the creation God made them male and female." That is a statement of fact. We note the number of males and females in the world has remained in about equal proportion throughout the ages thus preventing wars for the possession of mates. But the pre-existence of Christ—"Before the world was, I am"—the unity of the Trinity; the nature of Christ who could work miracles, raise the dead and yet suffer Himself to be bound, led captive, be crucified and buried; the mystery of the Man who, when risen from the grave, ascended into heaven in like manner as

some day He will reappear; the mystery of the Christ who stands at the door and knocks waiting for sinners to grant Him admission to their hearts—this is beyond understanding.

I am amazed when I survey the wondrous Cross upon which the Son of God hung and died, but I am humble and penitently accept the bounteous provisions of this cross and the shed blood of Christ. I take Him at His word, yielding my life without reserve to Him. He is my all and in all. What matter though the night of ignorance is still unbroken by any ray of light! I am willing to wait and wait for the fullness of time. Knowledge is more valuable and attractive because of waiting to acquire it.

A UNION WITH CHRIST.

And the church: Adam needed a helpmeet to comfort him and be his consoling pleasure and joy. Christ has the church for such praise and joy. A wife and husband are complete together, so the church and Christ complement each other. Neither wife nor church can be separate from their mates and complements. The wife is visible on earth; the church pure, true and glorified, is visible only in heaven. The church, as the wife, will receive all of Christ's love, sacrifice, service and patience. For the church to depart from her Lover is as tragic as for a loved wife to desert her husband and consort herself with other and strange men to whom she has no obligations or attachments. The church has a duty to be true to Christ. She has an obligation to love, in word and deed, to have as unified a program of co-operation as though she were one; to forbear each other in the Lord as though all were living under a common roof, and their happiness depended upon keeping together, being pleasant to each other and determining that nothing should break or lessen the happiness existing between them. Spiritual health will bring such a union with Christ. Sin causes separation. The soul that sins wishes to hide and flee from the wrath which is to come. There is no pleasure in a church service, the sermon has no meaning, hymns are empty in value, when Satan has control of the heart. The church, with nothing to conceal, must be all for Christ. "Not my way but thine, O Lord" is our prayer.

The true church should take advantage of its mystery of power and confine herself to converting those who are lost. The job of the church is to convert from sin and to edify believers. Let us not sit at ease in Zion. Try to make the church the sort of church we want it to be, but make it the sort of church which Christ wishes it to be and the sort of church Christ can make it. Many of the elements in the church, today, which seem incapable of change can be removed by the Spirit of the living God. We need this Spirit if we would be true to Him. Let us advance under the leadership of Jesus.

XXXIII.

THE CHRISTIAN LAW OF MARRIAGE

"Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."
—EPH. 5:33.

THE MYSTICAL MEANING OF MARRIAGE.

Nevertheless: Christians have been urged to be filled with the Spirit. Their home lives are to give evidence of a mutual Christ-like fidelity to each other. Love and reverence are to be practiced by both husband and wife if Christ's purpose is to be fulfilled and Christian homes are to be saved from those frequent shipwrecks which are evident in godless homes or in homes which try to adapt their beliefs to the times in which they live. There seems to be an increasing desire to broaden the teachings of the Bible to the realm of ethical culture. The wages of sin in the home is still death to the happiness and continuance of the home. The Christian home is the cornerstone of all civilization, whether they be ancient or modern. This mystery is beyond understanding. Spiritual benefits cannot be forced like hothouse plants. The culture of Christian graces must be as natural as the development of a seed. Christ came to prepare souls for their eternal home in heaven, but also to make better homes by making better wives, better husbands, and better relationships in everyday life. The common everyday occurrences of any home, anywhere, under every condition, at any time, may be bettered and transformed by the injection of the principles of Jesus. This is a mystery which must be accepted as a fact. Who doubts gravity because it cannot be pictured, seen or handled? We keep our feet upon the ground and forget all about it except when we stumble and fall and feel injurious effects. So with the mystery of His indwelling Spirit and power. We cannot understand how the family altar can help, but the fact remains that

it does. Prayer seems empty until we have realized the presence of God.

Preceding verses have developed the relationship between Christ and the church and a husband and his wife as identical in sort. The union of the church is the union of the family in Christ. As members of the Body of Christ we are to do nothing which will make the home different in spirit from the church. Equality is to be recognized. Pedestals do not belong in a home. God's idea of marriage is far above man's conception. Now we turn from this mystical discussion to a summing up of the practical expression of human love. How are we to show love? In many ways love is like light. It is itself, because it can be no other. Love must show itself, speak its promptings and continue, because it *is* love and can never be anything else. And yet a study of love may be helpful. The sun shines and gives health and benefit. Man's light is subject to all sores of experimentation and dangers. Forced human loves are like the light made by dynamos, oil or fuel. Fires need to be fed or they smoke and go out, prove unsatisfying, lack heat or have too much heat.

A UNIVERSAL DUTY.

Let every one of you in particular: Whether we understand the mystery of marriage or not or whether we can explain our love, or know how making our love like Christ's is to change matters for us, we still have an obligation to follow the Bible teachings on marriage. There are neither exceptions nor excuses for not applying Biblical teachings. Every husband is commanded to love his wife as Christ loved the church and emptied Himself in self-sacrificing love for it. How can any home fail to give up to even human expectations if this Christ-like limit or ideal is reached? Walk humbly in the loving steps of the Savior. "Greater love hath no man (or husband) than this, that a man give his life for his friends." Chrysostom writes, "Wouldst thou that thy wife obey thee as the church does Christ? Have care for her, then, as Christ for the church." Christ teaches and gives us an example of self-renunciation in love. Love would rather give of itself than receive.

How many husbands enter the marriage relationship as a matter of convenience? They are lonely, the house needs a caretaker, clothes require mending, a house has been built and it hangs heavy on one's hands, children need preparation for school, so search is made for a healthy, clean, upright woman and an offer of marriage is made to her. Many duties fall to the wife, but love makes a wife more than a servant, nurse, housekeeper or companion. For love she will gladly work without other wages than smiles, words of appreciation and the companionship of the one loved. But compel her—never! Christ loves us, so He quietly gives and gives and gives; waits and waits and waits, knocks at the door of our heart, and stands there to be ready to enter when we open to Him. So let every husband love. This love may be unrequited but, eventually, bread cast upon the waters will return after many days with compound interest. Husbands are the voice and interpreters of Christ to their wives. He lives through them. Your Christlikeness may lead the one dear to you to the Savior.

SINCERE LOVE.

So love his wife even as himself: A man's own wife is to be loved even as he loves himself. We laughingly speak of a wife as being "the better half" or a better part of ourself. Paul, in all earnestness, urges the unity of self-interest and Christlike love of a man's own wife. Self-interest will necessitate it. Both have common interests. Each is inseparable and part of the other as head and body are inseparable. Verse twenty-five tells a man to love as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it. This love is to be singular—no complications, no betrayals, no jealousies, no fears; it is to be particular—concentrated upon the one to whom he is legally, morally and physically bound; and it is to be prevailing—not intermittent, nor flaring for the honeymoon and fading with the years or the advancing of age or illness; not beautiful when all is well, and dying when adversity knocks or faults are manifest. A husband's love is to endure, as Christ's love to the end.

His interest is in himself, his preservation, health, com-

fort, nourishment, rest and efficiency are to be equaled by identical interest in his wife. There is to be no expression of tyranny, harshness or unfaithfulness which he would not use upon himself. A man does not contest superiority with himself, look in a mirror and say, "I am boss; you have to do as I say." He does not need to do this to himself, neither should he do it to his wife. Christ never forces Himself or His plan of salvation upon a sinner. He says "Come unto me." The Eastern shepherd leads his sheep and goes before them to prepare the way and look for dangers and green pastures. The Palestinian shepherd never drives. Let a husband in the name of Christ as lovingly lead his wife and not drive, compel, beat, argue, be silent or distress her.

A man should love his wife as himself because both are sinners. Each has faults. Each thinking of his own mistakes, failings, need of charity and forgiveness, will seek to give what he wishes to receive. "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." An unbelieving wife may be won by kindness, patience, prayer, love and persistence. The Cross of Christ has triumphed over the wrecks of time by its simple, real and silent testimony. Any other course is bound to result in unwilling submission, divorce, ill-will, resentment, disgust, hatred, pain, disgrace and dissention, bringing upon children unhappiness, suffering and the possibility of duplicating similar disturbances in their own marriages. A Christian home is like a seed bearing fruit after its kind. An unchristian home is apt to reap a whirlwind. We reap what we sow and more. Husbands, what shall the harvest be? What is the harvest? In California they have a pest of a weed which is known as the pigweed. Almost as soon as the first two leaves appear above the ground, flowers begin to bloom and seed ripens. It is a long struggle to rid a field of this weed when once it has started, its progeny is so prolific. Lack of Christian love in a home is as fruitful in evil, harm and trouble. First God in the heart, then love! First loyalty to Him and then the right loyalty in human relationships. Be not unequally yoked together.

Husband, love your wife as yourself. Show interest in her problems, tragedies, failures, joys. She craves sympathy

and interest. A husband broods, schemes, dreams, suffers and, frequently, keeps all to himself. This is contrary to the policy of the Master. He confides the evils of the times to us, the dangers confronting the church and the impurities of offered sacrifices and love. Let the husband confide in his wife. Some fear lest she tell it over the neighborhood and make comments which are far from the truth. If this is the sort of wife he married in haste, blame rests upon himself, not his wife. He chose her and asked her to marry him. If she proves to be false to his expectations he owes it to her and to himself to change her in the name of Christ into what Christ would have her become. The husband should also have forbearance for his wife. The course of true love never runs smoothly. Think what Christ has to stand in us, and, in memory of this, try to stand a bit for Christ's sake.

THE WILL OF GOD.

And the wife see that she reverence her husband: The wife also has her responsibility. Obligations are mutual and not limited to one or the other. Reverence is sometimes translated "fear." "His mercy is on them that fear him (Luke 1:50)." "A devout man and one that feared God (Acts 10:2)." Cornelius (Acts 10:22) was "a just man and one that feared God." "He that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him (Acts 10:35)." "Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the earth and did reverence to the king (I Kin. 1:31)." Sarah and Abraham are cited (I Pet. 3:6) as being ideals in the marriage covenant, "Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord." Reverence is thus seen to include or to be attached as a leaf to a branch and a branch to a limb and a limb to the trunk, with a lot of other virtues which are almost inseparable. Reverence is respect, adoration, trust, obedience and a free, spontaneous affectionate regard; it is cheerful obedience and affectionate confidence, not a groveling fear which a trembling, terrified slave has for a master; reverence sees God's will and plan of the ages being perpetuated in her and honors and respects her husband. This reverence sees the best, dwells lovingly upon the best and gradually develops the other virtues in which he has been deficient.

A friend, speaking of a doctor who was recently married, mentioned the change in appearance which the wife had produced. The husband was previously so lost in his profession as to be careless in matters of personal dress. Now he is spick and span, and known in the circles in which he moves, as one of its best dressers. Let a wife so love her husband as to improve his appearance and be alert to see the soul immaculately clothed with those Christian virtues which are required for admission into the circle of heaven. Pagans are said to have been surprised over the excellencies of Christian wives. They were far superior to their own in purity, fidelity, devotion and the qualities which make for a happy home. "What women these Christians have." The Christian woman who reverences her husband brings blessings upon herself and her household.

It is said that a glowworm never shines after becoming a parent. This is also true of some wives. The responsibilities of motherhood begin a fading process. Their absorption and confinement in household duties wear them down and cause premature fading. The husband is to be blamed for withdrawing those courtesies, surprises, diversions and helps which made life a long dream in courtship days. A husband is to be worthy of reverence. Being reborn of the Holy Spirit can make him worthy. Marriage is spiritual union in Christ.

I.

OBEDIENCE TO PARENTS

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right." EPH. 6:1.

Paul has described the walk of the believer filled with God's Spirit, which expresses itself in the inner life by bringing happiness, rejoicing and thanksgiving; and in the outer life, by creating a loving fellowship and understanding between wives and husbands, husbands and wives and church members to each other. Paul, passing from the general to the particular, now brings the walk of the believer into the problems of home-life. The spirit of the home colors or discolors worship in God's house.

UNIVERSALLY COMMANDED.

Children: "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world are ye subject to ordinances (Col. 2:20)." No distinction is made between sons and daughters. No special privileges are extended or expressed. As a parent seeks to protect and instruct children, so Paul would advise his converts. By children, he does not necessarily suggest the younger members of the household. All whose parents are living need this message. According to Old Testament laws and customs, the obligation of children to parents did not end upon their presentation at the temple or their arrival at maturity, but continued throughout the life of their parents. We need to get back to this custom, to safeguard our society.

THE DUTY OF CHILDREN.

Obey your parents: Obedience implies not only willingness to heed advice and give careful consideration to, but also the purpose to unhesitatingly act upon this advice. It has the

imperative of a commanding officer to his subordinate. They are not to question but to obey even though life may be lost in obedience.

The Jewish home recognized two definite types of obedience. The one of a wife to her husband, characterized by more or less equality, and the other, the obedience of a bond-servant or child to its parent which was to be unquestioned. The child had no right to the privileges of a wife, or one of the same station in life. According to current opinion a child belonged to the parent very much as the modern boy claims possession of his dog. This opinion was disapproved by Christ and changed considerably as Christianity developed. The child gradually became more confiding in parents and enjoyed greater freedom in consequence. This liberty was soon misused.

Many young people accepted Christ in the days of Paul. They saw in this new religion a breaking away from old traditions. Paul cautions them by warning them of the old law of obedience which was still in force. Children and parents may come to a better understanding of each other and work their problems on a co-operative basis, but the child still owes obedience to its parent.

The reason for this reminder was apparent; the home is the vestibule of the church and leads us to Christ. The child who has not learned to obey parents finds it difficult to learn the higher law of obedience to Christ. Parents have a moral duty to insist upon the obedience of their children. While this discipline has its problems, its trying moments and its stern aspects, the parent is entrusted with the formation of the habit of obedience so the law of God may be obeyed. Disobedience in the home may be responsible for the loss of the souls of that household. Disobedience travels in bad company. "Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents (Rom. 1:30)." "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, unthankful, unholy, disobedient to their parents (II Tim. 3:2)."

Paul includes both father and mother in this verse. "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother (Prov. 1:8)." The organization of modern

society gives the mother greater opportunity for instruction of her children. But this does not belittle the importance of obedience to both parents. A word of caution should be given to parents lest they take advantage of the law here mentioned. Someone has suggested that parents give few rules and insist on absolute obedience to these rules. Children are generally willing to co-operate when they realize the reasonableness of a parent's requests.

THE MANNER OF OBEDIENCE.

In the Lord: The question is sometimes asked, "Should a child obey a parent when the parent asks him to do something which the child knows to be wrong?" Christ very clearly placed the obligation to God before every other. No child should break the law of God to obey a parent. Christ is Supreme Master and to Him we owe complete allegiance. Jesus is the Supreme Authority; He is the Head of the home. The answer to this question becomes more clear. We owe obedience to parents, but only as they are in the Lord. The limit of obedience is given in Acts 5:29: "We ought to obey God rather than man." We are children of a holy God (I Cor. 7:14). Our obedience is to be in Him, to please Him and to do what He wishes. We might go a step further and say that the love of God will bring a loving obedience. Frequently children obey for fear of their parents. They dread the punishment that comes as the consequence of disobedience. The Lord is also Judge. He must punish evil as well as reward obedience, but a supreme love for Him will keep us from error. This love will cause us to hesitate to displease Him and seek what brings pleasure to Him.

THE REASON FOR OBEDIENCE.

For this is right: Quite frequently, we overlook God's right to command, or a parent's right to command. How frequently children pout, become angry, deceptive, or openly oppose their parents' opinions or views. The child forgets or overlooks the past care of the parent, the protecting wisdom, the Divinely relegated authority and far vision of loving eyes. God planned that children should obey their parents. It is

just and righteous that they should give honor, respect and obedience to those who gave them life.

We do not question the Divine wisdom of nature. The seasons obeying the law of nature follow each other; the development from seed to flower, to ripened fruit is in accordance with certain unchangeable laws; the movement of the stars, the sun and the moon are in obedience to Divine law, eternal as the heavens. Any breaking of these laws would result in universal catastrophe. Every apple which falls to the ground obeys the law of gravity; every stream which flows toward the ocean, every drop of rain from the heavens, every breath of wind that blows obeys God's laws. If nature so blindly, minutely and profitably follows His will, why should human beings, the highest order of God's kingdom, defy His command to obey parents and God?

A child's obedience in the home is fundamental to his later usefulness in human society. The family at peace with itself and its God becomes a useful unit in church and state. Governments endeavor to break up and eliminate criminal gangs. They train police to track down offenders. People are taxed vast sums to build up machinery to compel respect for the law. Christianity offers an efficient program of law enforcement. If this respect for law were followed it would do away with necessity for armed intervention. "Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old (Prov. 23:22)." For this is right.

II.

CHRISTIANITY BEGINS AT HOME

"Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise." —EPH. 6:2.

HOW FLOWS THE TIDE?

Honour: The meaning of words changes with the passing of time. The word "honor" has lost a great deal of its force with the advance of civilization. The Hebrews come closer to its original meaning than do the people of western civilization. Honor implies more than veneration or respect; it includes reverence and obedience; in other words, a practical loyalty and allegiance. Inward honor is reverence; outward honor is obedience. Dr. Charles R. Erdman sees in the spirit of today "a restlessness under restraint, a reckless disregard of parental advice, a lawless demand for freedom which rends family life and produces serious problems." One of the causes for this is a lessening honor of children for their parents. In both Christian and other civilizations this duty has been constantly recognized. Christianity gave a higher expression to honor by associating it with doing the will of God from the heart. The Chinese have lost less of this spirit of honor than other nationalities. The change so lamented by parents is not entirely the fault of children. Parents are equally if not more responsible. The external lives they live, more extended absences from home, growing fear of offending the child, hesitation to curb their children's self-expression, decadence of the spirit of reverence in the home, lessened respect for law, and irritation over recognizing any authority—have had weakening influences.

The Bible stresses the duty of honoring parents. "For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a

gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me (Matt. 15:4-8)." "Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself (Matt. 19:19)." "For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whosoever curseth father or mother, let him die the death (Mark 7:10)." "Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother (Mark 10:19)." "Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother (Luke 18:20)."

This command implies absolute and unquestioned obedience. There is a single qualification—obey your parents in the Lord. The Bible does not support blind obedience to parental commands when obedience involves some act contrary to the law of God. No child could be justified for stealing because the parent commands it. A child should not be involved in his parents' disobedience and sin. We do not know very much about Christ's early life, but we have every reason to believe that in the carpenter shop at Nazareth and until presentation in the Temple at twelve, Christ carried out the traditional obedience which was required in all strict Jewish homes.

The Old Testament is much sterner than the New. Leviticus (19:3) commands fear toward both father and mother. "Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father, and keep my sabbaths." The fear of punishment hinders disobedience. A dutiful son keeps his father's commands and forsakes not the law of his mother (Prov. 6:20). Obedience did not exclude affection (I Kings 19:20). The fifteenth chapter of Proverbs cites the foolishness of a man despising his mother, and, in 19:26, the penalty for driving a parent away from home and bringing shame and reproach upon himself. We need more Old Testament warnings today. Depression has brought glaring examples of children who disregarded obligations to parents and mercilessly turned them out to be public

charges without making any provision for them or making any self-denial in their behalf. In some cases the burden of responsibility was shifted to others.

WHAT IS DUE A FATHER.

Thy father: The New Testament makes little distinction between a child's obedience to the father and mother. While the mother's word is law in the home because of the nature of her duties and the necessary absence of the father as breadwinner, the child is not relieved of honor and obedience to the father. The New Testament also implies a harmonious authority or division of authority between father and mother which is clearly understood by parents and children. Unfriendly conflicts frequently occur unless this joint authority is understood by all. The child is to think more of his duty to the parents than of the parents' duty to him. A child is apt to take parental care for granted and plan to absorb as much as possible from the home before it establishes an independent home of its own. In other words, tax traffic for all it will bear. How few feel they owe anything to father or mother before they become independent of them.

On the other hand, there is an obligation on the part of the parent to be worthy of obedience. Authority is not a weapon or excuse for careless indifference or useless incompetence. Pray for Divine guidance and the leading of the Spirit of God to bring up those whom the Lord has given, not bring them up and away they go, but bring them up in the way they should go.

OUR MOTHER.

And mother: Discipline in Christ's home was probably easier and less punitive than in this factory age. Joseph and Mary spent their evenings at home with children and friends. Judging by Palestinian homes of today, much time was spent in performing tasks requiring the cooperation of all members of the home—mending, spinning, weaving, preserving and interesting conversation. We have lost much of this spirit. Machinery in speeding operations has produced a nervous element requiring strange scenes, incessant activity and outside

diversion. The home loses understanding of the tasks of each other and all because of an irritable desire to argue rather than give deference or obey. Life is too complex. We need Christ in it. Not many need the caution to love God more than parent. "He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me (Matt. 10:37)." The same heart loves God and parents, but in a different way; one is human, the other Divine. Our affection toward earthly parents is never to take precedence of affection for our Father in heaven. God always comes first. This precedence will never lessen our affection toward earthly parents.

The honor due fathers and mothers can best be understood by examining its expressions. First, we owe reverence toward those who are older, whose experience in life has brought them many valuable lessons; whose words possess wisdom impossible to those of younger years; a reverence which excludes impertinence, ridicule and indifference.

The second element is care. The toil and sacrifice of a parent for children during their years of dependency calls for repayment in the harvest years of parental life when age brings lessened strength, greater loneliness and craving for companionship. The closing years of a parent's life thus give the child an opportunity to gratefully recall and make tangible recognition of the beginning years of the child's life. The obligation of the child to provide for the temporal needs and wants of the parent begins with the earliest opportunity for so doing and ends with death. This provision is more than material; money can never take the place of sympathetic love and words of tender appreciation. The third element is confidence, absolute trust and sharing of secrets; wholesome companionability and pleasure in each other's company. Members of a home can never get on each other's nerves if they have confidence. When a child begins to place greater confidence in friends than in parents, look for trouble.

The home is a training school. "The rod and reproof giveth wisdom, but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame (Prov. 29:15)." We cannot save our country until we save our home. It is impossible to expect obedience to the

Constitution when the word of a parent is questioned. How can those who do not obey parents hope to obey God? Honor thy father and mother.

A MOTIVE FOR OBEDIENCE.

Which is the first commandment: The command to honor father and mother is the Fifth in the group of Ten Commandments given to Moses, but in practical importance ranks first. Obedience to the Lord cannot be expressed until there is obedience to parents. A child first loves those who cared for it. This love soon looks heavenward and learns the language of love toward God. This latter love must take precedence over love toward earthly parents.

Please note that honor is commanded. "God hath commanded it (Deut. 5:16)." "Hearken unto thy father that begat thee and despise not thy mother when she is old. Buy the truth, and sell it not, also wisdom and instruction, and understanding. The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice (Prov. 23:22-25)."

"My son, hear the instructions of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother (Prov. 1:8)." "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee (Ex. 20:12)." Emphasis is placed upon honor, because if parents are worthy of that honor, if children are trained to honor and obey their parents, and are taught to know the will of God, there will be small likelihood of straying from the way of right and forsaking God.

SECONDARY MOTIVE FOR OBEDIENCE.

With promise: Honoring parents is commanded by God. It should therefore be practiced by all, but God not only commands, He also offers rewards for obedience. See how frequently a command and a reward go side by side in the Beatitudes. In the Old Testament, this command to honor parents is the only one having a promised blessing attached to it. "Honour thy father and thy mother, as the Lord thy God hath

commanded thee: that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee (Deut. 5:16)." A bright future stretches ahead of obedience to command; salvation may depend upon it; value as citizens and prosperity as a nation may hinge upon it. So present and future happiness may be obtained through the simple expedient of honoring those it is a privilege to love—our parents. The promise attached to the command to honor parents, does not declare escape from poverty, danger, care, trouble and sorrow, nor are those who honor parents prosperous in proportion to their honor or long lived in proportion to the degree of their honor. It does mean, however, that a child who honors parents will be compelled to be industrious, frugal, clean minded, pure lived, devout and considerate of others. These habits of temperance, goodness, godliness and cleanliness are productive of happiness, health, wise interests and long life. Obedience rewards by giving happy memories, richness and contentment to life.

It would not be fair to speak of the promise attached to obedience without mentioning the penalties which God imposes for disobedience. "A foolish son is the heaviness of his mother (Prov. 10:1)." "Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness (Prov. 20:20)." There is no room for him in decent society. "He that smiteth or curseth father or mother shall be put to death (Matt. 15:4; Ex. 21:15)." "Honour thy father and thy mother."

III.

THE HARVEST OF FILIAL HONOR

"That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." —EPH. 6:3.

PEACE AND HAPPINESS.

That it may be well with thee: The well-being inferred is not merely length of days or prosperity which comes from long and wise effort, but the inward peace of mind, the fruit of well doing, which brings repose to the features and sound sleep at night. This inward happiness is independent of the house in which we live, the extent of our possessions or even physical health or employment; it may be independent of any or of all the normal cares of life. It is like the peace of God which passeth all understanding. The Jew conscientiously honored his parents to receive the approbation of God and the long anticipated promised land. But the principle is almost universal. Now Christian people find merit in giving honor to those who have given them life. Paul emphasizes the truth that well being begins in the home. Happiness is not a butterfly to lead us far astray. Joy and happiness begin with father and mother. Until our duty to them has been fulfilled to the best of our ability, until we have invoked God's blessing upon earthly parents, we are unworthy to receive blessings from our heavenly Father.

Blessing attaches to those in every land who never grow beyond their parents or get to the point where they feel superior to those who may not have advanced to such social, national, educational or political heights. These deserve the well being of long life. "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season (Job 5:26)." "The fear of the Lord prolongeth days; but the years of the wicked shall be shortened (Prov. 10:27)." Disobedience to parents is always referred to as evil; it is an entering

wedge to the dissolution of the nation and the destruction of the temple. Obedience carries a promise of long life to the individual and prosperity to the nation. "Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents (Rom. 1:30)." "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedience to parents, unthankful, unholy (II Tim. 3:2)."

A PRESENT REWARD.

That thou mayest live long on the earth: This is God's promise. Earth is a preparatory school for heaven. How can we enjoy the beauties of an eternal city when we have not learned to find happiness in our earthly home? Heaven would be disappointing unless we enter it to pass from the joy of a long life on earth to an endless peace in heaven. Paul quite properly extended this promise of long life to all made in the image of God, Gentiles and Jews. Who does not honestly wish long life? To what limits will people go to extend their life for a few years or weeks? Few are ever ready to leave this earth; there is always the desire, expressed or unexpressed, to live to see what the future can bring; to continue in the fellowship of friends, to see children happily married, or win a few more for the Master. Even those who, in moments of despondency or despair speak of life as not worth while, secretly cherish life and do not wish to lose it. Honor of father and mother, or, if orphaned, honor of neglected parents, will bring prosperity, and length of days. This is a challenge to good behavior. "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord (Josh. 24:15)."

Parents, in their religious instruction, need to give the promise as well as the command. None of us like to be commanded; most are perfectly willing to obey if we see a benefit to be received. The Lord's commandments seek to help those whom He has created. He never commands His children to do anything of disadvantage to them; His seed bears an abun-

dant harvest. These words also come as an urge to make up wasted time. It is easy in later life to become unconsciously self-satisfied, absorbed in problems to the exclusion of the best interests of parents. Having flown from the home nest and having built one for ourselves, it is the line of least resistance to permit the new attachments and supervision of home and children to usurp time, money, affection and interest to the exclusion of parents. A few parents openly resent this loss of attention; some quietly bear it while deeply feeling the lessening time, thought and affection; a few bravely take it to God in prayer. This verse should bring us back to that sacred God-given obligation from which we are never free, as long as parents are alive.

IV.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

"And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

—EPH. 6:4.

THE FATHER'S PART.

And ye fathers: The word "parent" might have been used. Moses referred to his parents as "his father." Father and mother share the responsibility of a Christian household. Neither can find scriptural warrant for relegating blame or training to the other for the souls God has given them. God gave certain authority to Adam after Eve had sinned, but this does not minimize a father's opportunity, privilege and duty in training his children to love the Lord and obey Him in all things. The Father generally possesses the final word in home discipline and government, but where love reigns, use of this authority will never be a problem. A desire to do the will of God, to have His guidance and the blessing of His spirit, will be rewarded by a natural Christ-like solution minus argument, coercion or internal division. The old Mosaic law was very explicit upon a father's duty in religious instruction. "Take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: But teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons (Deut. 4:9)." "Fear God . . . keep all his statutes and his commandments—all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged (Deut. 6:2)." "Beware lest thou forget the Lord (Deut. 6:12)." "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all His ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul to keep the commands of the Lord and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good (Deut. 10:12, 13)?"

DO NOT ABUSE POWER.

Provoke not your children: Fathers and parents in general are cautioned negatively against provoking their children to wrath and are counseled positively to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Authority should be exercised for the children's good and not as a vent for the parent's irritation, displeasure, exasperation, and unreasonable, illnatured criticism and complaint. Many parents wishing quiet and peace for themselves form rules for their children so harsh, unfair and unreasonable as to exclude cooperation, cheerful service and growth in grace. Love, prayer, patience, gentleness and sympathy accomplish far more than anger or demonstration of parental rights and authority. A quiet, calm explanation of the need for certain conduct and attitudes usually meets with favorable reactions. Compulsion, even in the right, bears a lean harvest. Try to "make obedience a delight and disobedience a pain." Recollection of one's own childhood impressions and reactions will frequently keep a parent from being unfair. It is strange how little parents sympathize with their own children's changing moods and developing opinions of right and wrong. Parents who use rough, harsh, loud, tyrannical, needless and even insulting language to children which would not be used to others of their own age prove they are out of harmony with childhood.

If parents do not show courtesy and polite consideration to their own children, from whom will these characteristics be obtained? Parents who yell at their children, call them fools and blockheads and threaten to "knock their heads off" are surely provoking their children to despise their parents and disregard words of wisdom. How can such a provoking parent lead a child to Jesus and teach a Heavenly Father's love? God commands parents to bring up a household in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Three rules have been given to prevent unlawful, unchristian provocation of children to wrath. 1. Avoid harshness and severity of demeanor. 2. Do not weaken the necessity for obedience by resentfulness on the part of the child. 3. Avoid constant fault finding.

GUARD LEST DEVOTION BE DISCOURAGED.

To wrath: Anger discourages devotion. An angry parent is apt to stir the child to anger. Undue severity will produce resentment over unreasonable attitudes which rankle in the soul and lessen a child's respect and love for a parent. Unfair, cruel, superficial judgment leaves an indelible imprint upon the mind and heart of a tender impressionable child. "Guard lest they be discouraged (Col. 3:21)." "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying (Prov. 19:18)." If a parent's speech is always with grace and seasoned with salt there is little likelihood of pampering the child and permitting it by a display of temper to obtain what it wishes and become the proverbial spoiled child. Self-indulgence in childhood leads to intemperance in maturity and independence towards God. The unrestrained child is apt to be a menace to society. Doing the will of God always carries prohibitions and punishments. The caution intended here is against that form of over-rule which tends to turn a child into an enemy rather than a confidant. It is easy to provoke the sensitive, inexperienced mind of the child to such a point as to discourage all desire to cooperate in goodness. How often children say, "What's the use, you can't please them, anyhow." Thoughtless, unjust criticism is not good soil in which to plant desire to please Jesus. Adults have turned adolescents from prayer, Bible study, and church attendance by nagging, with good objectives but poor example in identical lines of conduct. Ill-chosen, angry words leave permanent scars. Harshness, even though prompted by the best of motives, may sear budding aspirations. Pray for guidance lest children be provoked to wrath and stubborn resistance to Godliness. There are limits to even parental authority. God alone possesses absolute authority which is never abused. Remember God sends the sun and rain in equal measure upon just and unjust. Pray for ability to correct lovingly without leaving smoldering fires.

PARENTS REPRESENT GOD.

But bring them up: Paul now turns from negative to positive words of counsel. Parents must follow definite schedules if their children are to learn to love the Lord. Children rarely

"grow up" religiously. Spiritual conversations require delicate direction and impulse. To "bring up" involves "education," development, and guidance from wrong steps into right ones; nourishment is implied. A growing body needs food. A maturing spirit requires religious sustenance. "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it (Prov. 22:6)." Children do not select their parents. Parents therefore have a sacred obligation to recognize and utilize their God-given task of spiritual nurture. One parent feeling strongly upon this point exclaimed, "If ever I feel the need of being a Christian, it is when I think of my children and my responsibility to them."

Be sure of this—if parents do not bring children up, the devil will. Nourish them rather than drive them, cherish them rather than force them. To avoid mistake, use the same tactics towards your children that God has used towards you, His child. Various rules have been given. Among these may be cited the following: 1. Let your children know you expect them to do right. Let them understand nothing will please you as much as their earnest effort to follow guidance received in answer to prayer. 2. Reprove when the most good can be accomplished by it. There are moments when the child is in no frame of mind to be helped by criticism. This is particularly true of public tirades in the presence of playmates. Public embarrassment is not soon forgotten. A quiet talk at bedtime, accompanied by prayer for God's forgiveness and petition for His guidance, is a better way. 3. Pray that God may give you a fair and honest estimate of the child's worth. "Despise not one of these little ones." The best characteristics do not always appear on the surface. The stalk of corn must be full grown before the ear appears. 4. Make allowance for individual differences. Each child is a law to himself. God who made even the leaves of a tree to vary is not apt to form children identical. Two apparently similar stalks of wheat microscopically examined show wide differences. 5. Place a prayerful, God-revealed value upon your influence. Idle words, seemingly water upon a duck's back, may leave scars. A child's dreams touch depths unsounded by many adults. 6. There are limits of authority. 7. "Ask and ye shall receive."

"Seek and ye shall find." Christ invites parents to seek wisdom from above. 8. Parents are interpreters of God.

A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST.

In the nurture: Nurture implies discipline and chastening. Chastening has an important part to play in education of God's children. Israel needed frequent correction. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." A growing child, like a growing plant, needs gentle pressures, safeguards, guides, and constant varying attention in the stages of maturity if there is to be an understanding of God and an appreciation of Christ's love. Education advances from grade to grade. Nurture in the Lord is also a process, a growth, an advancing from fact to fact in Christian experience. But Jesus leads all the way. Parents beginning with the premise that children belong to God, creator of all, dedicate their children to Him in baptism and thus link themselves with God. Children cannot be committed to the Lord at too tender an age. Religion is as essential as food. Children cannot be allowed to do as they please in the matter of their prayers, Bible study, church attendance, giving to the Lord, and personal devotion. We arrange their diets, why not their spiritual food. We demand cleanliness as vital to health. Why not instill in the child's mind the virtue of Godliness; its values in time and eternity, the strength to be derived from contact with God in the events of everyday life. The need for spiritual guidance, the nearness of God. His brooding care and love constantly draw out the good and check the evil. Many promising buds must be removed if prize flowers are to be grown. Many a childish whim must remain unsatisfied if life's largest purpose is to be fulfilled. Wrong tendencies require correction if a household is to be Christian.

The Bible is our measuring rod. If God's holy word says an act or practice is wrong, it is wrong. Place restriction in the right place. "Thus saith the Lord." An all-knowing God has said, "Thou shalt not." Use every means to emphasize Christian truth and the necessity for cultivation of Christian graces and virtues. We are nourished through Christ. It is possible to nurture even by chastening, by gentle but firm pressures in habits, impressions, opinions, friendships, and

conduct. We cannot grow and mature in the perfect man and the stature of Christ except we receive nurture in the Lord.

FEARING THE LORD.

And admonition of the Lord: Training frequently necessitates severe action and drastic correction if the result is to be fear of the Lord and service in the beauty of holiness. It is equally desirable for each member of the household to earnestly search his own heart and apply Christ's cleansing power before it is too late. Today is the day of salvation. Jesus was brought to the Temple at a tender age. He purposed to be "about His Fathers business" while yet a small lad. Wise advice and constant urging start children in the right path towards righteousness and truth. Admonishing includes warnings, counsels, instruction, guidance, teaching, reproof, and frequent reminders. A doctor told a young man who had come to him for advice, "You should have come to me forty years ago." The young man replied, "That would have been impossible, I am only twenty-five." "Then your father should have come to me fifteen years before you were born," the doctor answered. "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shall write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates (Deut. 6:6-9)." Such instruction will produce more children who would come to the pastor and say, "I would like to join the church."

Admonition is to be in the Lord, and in the will of the Lord. Turn conversation upon the great themes of scripture, the purpose for which life was given, the way of life eternal, the manner of witnessing for him, and words of Jesus. The teachings of Jesus are the basis of all culture. "The great peril is that children may be allowed to grow up with no respect for authority," says Dr. Erdman, "with no reverence for age, with no knowledge of Christian standards, with no habits

of deference and self-control." Let every father and parent exalt the word of God, Christ, and the spirit of God. Lay down no law but of God. Not "I will, I demand," but "God wills and God demands. Thus saith the Lord." The parent has no right to demand what the Lord does not authorize. If the parent is to speak for Christ, he must have the spirit of Christ; he must be approved by God in conduct and have the Spirit of God to guide and bless.

V.

CHRISTIANS STANDARD OF CONDUCT

"Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ."

—EPH. 6:5.

LIBERTY IN CHRIST.

Servants: The First Century Church found slavery quite common. Slavery was then in its lowest form. Cities teemed with slaves. Legislation gave little protection. Torture and cruelty went unquestioned. The Gospel proclaimed liberty through Jesus Christ. How natural then to find slaves among early converts. But promised happiness, so lacking in their world of employment, was not to inflame them into indignation over unjust and unchristian treatment, or precipitate uprisings over civil riots. The Apostles did not preach an inflammatory message. Sermons were filled with love and spiritual equality of all redeemed souls through their master Christ. Brotherhood and fellowship characterized the communion celebration and did not tolerate social distinctions. Before the Lord's Table worshipers were neither bond nor free, master nor servant. Christ's teachings and the apostles' messages sought to undermine the practice of slavery by developing a real spirit of loving fellowship far more effective than active opposition. The church taught subordination to constituted authority until conscience has been roused to such a point as to voluntarily free itself from its error by proper corrective legislation and accepted custom. Christ's cordial invitation, "Come unto me," brought soul emancipation to servants and slaves. "For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant is the Lord's free-man: likewise he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the servants of men (I Cor. 7:22, 23)." All of us are servants in some respects.

Contract labor and highly organized industrial life produce wrongs and submerged classes who chafe under the heel which grinds their bodies quite as much as did the servants of Paul's day. All who feel social, racial and industrial inequalities and submissions, may find a message of love, brotherhood and fellowship through Christ in the Gospel.

THE DUTY OF OBEDIENCE.

Be obedient: Jesus is to be honored at the work bench and at one's daily task. Disagreeableness of occupation is no excuse to forget or begrudge faithful service. "Be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward (I Pet. 2:18)." "Obey in all things . . . whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord and not unto men (Col. 3:22, 23)." "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God, and his doctrine be not blasphemed (I Tim. 6:1)." Service is to be rendered as unto the Lord. How different is this obligation from a recent ruling of labor that a workman lay only so many bricks per day, thus limiting his best by giving only a part of himself unto his employer. Labor should serve Christ before its foreman. True Christian service will never be a disadvantage to industry, capital, or the workman. If our task is approved of the Lord, we need never fear what men may say. Obedience to God comes first, produces first-rate workmanship, and is bound to result in being in the front ranks. He that is faithful in that which is least will be faithful also in that which is greater.

AUTHORITY TO BE RECOGNIZED.

To them that are your masters: "And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit (I Tim. 6:2)." "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God (Rom. 13:1)." Render to Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and to God the things which are God's. The Christian is not a lawbreaker but a lawmaker. Even bitter and cruel masters

are to be obeyed until the fulness of time has come. Moses followed the wrong path when he killed the cruel taskmaster. This protest was ineffective. God provided a remedy by freeing the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage. God always has a better way. When we give ourselves completely to our Heavenly Father, His spirit will direct us to a right course the following of which will leave us with a minimum of bitterness and regret. An inner voice will tell us how much of our service to give in return for the salary we are receiving. This question of the ages can be settled at the foot of the Cross of Him who gave to the uttermost that the world might know the Father and be saved by Him.

While servants and all employers are to be faithful in their obligations, civil and domestic employers, industrial and personnel managers have equal responsibility to be just, considerate and fair in all their dealings with those entrusted to their care. The Golden Rule is the rule for getting gold through complete cooperation of all who enter into agreements and are affected by them. Christ makes the organization of business more secure by applying those principles which will give healthy, fair, profitable employment under conditions which will not undermine self-respect or health. It is easy for masters to be proud, disdainful, harsh, arbitrary, exclusive, aloof, superior and unsympathetic; it is rarely easy to practice the spirit of Christ who girded Himself with a towel to wash His disciples' feet. How many foremen would fear losing their prestige by such ministry! True service in the name of Christ is the shortest way into the heart. Quiet forbearance has its advantages (I Pet. 2: 18-25). Christ sometimes places a yoke upon our shoulders.

AN EARTHLY RELATIONSHIP.

According to the flesh: Man's supervision and dominion extend only to the earth and worldly matters. Heaven has no masters. The King of Kings sits upon heaven's only throne. Foremen can touch no more than flesh, for which God has decreed dissolution and death. Man's spirit is ruled by Spiritual Powers. God is a Spirit and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Bodily emancipation fol-

lows spiritual emancipation. Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and all these things will be added unto you. Only God can free the soul. Death brings complete spiritual freedom after a limited freedom has been present in the hearts of those who serve Him as Master. Submission to Him brings less inflammation than submission to earthly rulers. Our liberty is in Christ. "For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant (I Cor. 7:22)." As members of Christ's body we are free, because He is free—free from the powers of the tempter, free from the bounds of sin, free from the hold of death. Oh grave where is thy victory, Oh death where is thy sting. Be not over concerned about the things of the world. What will they matter in a hundred years? The world will fade like a flower of the field. Think of the eternal and of Him who seeks to give us eternal life. This is life eternal that they might know Him.

DESTROY SELF.

With fear and trembling: This does not imply the cowering fear of a dog about to be whipped, or the servile trembling of a guilty child awaiting chastisement. We are to work with fear and trembling lest we displease God and fail to do what He would have us do. We are to fear lest we fall short of the glory of God and fail in loyal, faithful, earnest, careful, conscientious and reverent performance of the duty assigned to us. The Christian works under Christ's watchful eye. A Christian's work is judged by Christ. He fears himself. His fear of displeasing God dispels fear of displeasing an earthly master. Yet, fearing the Lord does not bring cowardice in facing a duty, a day, a problem, or a task. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of a wisdom. Fear of a human tongue, a master's whip, or earthly displeasure fades into insignificance compared with fear lest He shall not say, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy reward." Recall Paul's fear. "And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling, and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power (I Cor. 2.3, 4)." Paul

dreaded lest he fail to interpret the vision He had received and preach other than Christ and Him crucified. He felt the burden of lost souls, and wanted to leave no stone unturned in reaching their hearts. "And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him (II Cor. 7:15)." Their fear was lest they have fallen short of the glory of God as Paul had revealed Him to them. They feared lest their sins would find them out. "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, work not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12)." They were afraid of themselves.

UNMIXED SERVICE.

In singleness of your heart: Christian service should not have mental reservations or lip service with a dark and brooding heart. A Christian's heart and lips speak in harmony. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. We serve Him for love's sake rather than for self, earthly praise or promotion. Hypocrisy must not saturate or dilute a Christian's service. "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ, for he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons (Col. 3:22-25)." We are to do right for God's sake and for right's sake, not for appearance's sake. How many of the C.C.C. project boys labor with their hands to the exclusion of their hearts? God has pleasure in uprightness (I Chron. 29:17). Christ always speaks of a single heart, a single eye, a heart with a single purpose to serve Him. Guard against that guile in service which will lead to temptation, complication, compromise, and the danger of losing one's soul.

THE MANNER OF OBEDIENCE.

As unto Christ: Here lies the key to perfect service. Christ who is the author and finisher of our faith is to be the object

of our labor. Though we may be employed by men, we work for Christ. "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord (Rom. 14:7-9)." As we think of Christ and occupy our mind with heavenly things, we will be lifted above the things of the world and that circumstance which makes slaves of our hands and bodies. The disagreeable task is done "as unto the Lord," for we are slaves to the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 3:24). Let Christ assign tasks. Orders come from His lips. We are to do what He says. "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." This service will bring its complications. Household servants are sometimes confused as to why they sit at the table of the Lord with their mistress and yet eat in the kitchen alone; or why they are sisters in the Lord, but serving-maids in the parlor. This cause of irritation will be removed if the heart is busy with serving the Lord. He sees and understands. He rewards in due season. His love and grace are sufficient. Work as unto Christ, and peace will reign in your heart and satisfaction will fill your soul. There will be struggles, but victory awaits us at the end of the journey.

VI.

DOING THE WILL OF GOD

"Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart."—EPH. 6:6.

CONSCIENCE AS TASKMASTER.

Not with eyeservice: Everyone has seen and possibly been guilty of eyeservice, or work done for the benefit of a watching foreman or superior. Feverish activity and implied absorption in work stops with the passing of the boss or superior officer. The service rendered is for effect, to please the eye of men, and to obtain the approval of one whose favor is important. As long as there is the compulsion of an observing eye, work is performed, but when this external pressure or stimulus is removed, work becomes lax and may even stop. Various government projects and municipal labor jobs have suffered from this shovel leaning, lagging step, and slow motion of real life. The Christian should stand out conspicuously from this crowd of intermittent workers. He is conscious of the all-seeing eye of an ever vigilant God. The Believer seeks the favor of God, confident that men will also give approval. "We speak, not as pleasing men but God, which trieth our hearts (I Thess. 2:4)." "As ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12)." We dare not work slackly for the Lord. Our work for God does not depend upon wages received, rules of a union, conditions surrounding work, the character of the boss, the custom of other fellowworkmen, or the watchful eye of a foreman. We labor as unto the Lord. Perhaps the difference between the amount received in the pay envelope and the real worth of a well done task will be part of our treasure in heaven.

HONESTY IN WORK.

As menpleasers: Paul first gives the negative aspect service "not with eyeservice"; then the positive, "as menpleasers." Our task is to do the will of God from the heart as servants of Christ and not as mere employees. "For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ (Gal. 1:10)." This leaves no room for doubt. The issue is clear. Those who seek the favor of earthly masters, working eagerly in their presence and slowly in their absence, those who seek selfish gains, advancement, and praise above that which is fair, honest, reasonable and right, are living on a low level unsatisfying to God. The favor of men and their praise is a sweet morsel. There is pleasure in basking in such sunshine, but to deliberately seek such as an end rather than to desire above all to achieve the best and most faithful service consistent with our ability and training is not satisfactory to God. When workmen say, "I would rather work with a man who makes no profession of Christianity," there is something radically wrong with what the world sees as a weekday expression of religion. When a merchant, doctor, lawyer, clergyman, professional man, or layman seeks to give just enough of himself to get by; when the motive is to tax traffic for all it will bear; when there is greater solicitude for appearances than for truth in advertising, God cannot be pleased. And God is to be pleased. The code may permit shoddy work and material practice may not deny the method, the public may be ignorant of or tolerate the deception being perpetrated, society may not condemn, but God knows and the Book of Life will reveal in the fullness of time; upon this record depends eternity.

Gain in wealth, expansion, and goodwill is on the earthly side of the grave. Poor paint, shoddy material, adulteration, unearned profits, remain on earth. The soul bared before God is enriched by that which pleases God. The eyes of men have limitations; the eyes of God penetrate the hearts, minds, and souls of men. The unmasking of Gehazi (II Kin. 5) foretells the baring of our life before the judgment-throne of God. Seek more than good appearance, do more than put the best foot forward—have both feet worthy of being forward.

Strive to be true, honest, God fearing, loyal, obedient, pure, and humble in heart; serve God with sincerity. This principle universally applied would dismiss armies of foremen and inspectors as unnecessary. Every workman would be faithfully employed to the utmost of his capacity under the eye of God. Work behind the back would be no different from work face to face. The Golden Rule would be the rule for gaining gold. Buyer and seller, manufacturer and retailer, would mentally change places with each other. An invisible Master would direct actions, tasks, machines, conversations, contracts, leases, provisions, deeds, profits, and rates. Traffic would be controlled for the Kingdom of God. For Christ's spirit to dominate the hearts of men is no Utopia beyond the reach of men.

ENNOBLE YOUR TASK.

But as the servants of Christ: We now turn to further positive statements and principles for the direction of our energies. We are bond servants of Christ, bought with the price of His precious blood shed upon Calvary's cross. "We are His own, to use and to bless." "For he that was called in the Lord, being a bondservant is the Lord's freeman, likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant (I Cor. 7:22)." God's omnipresent eye sees and knows our service. What does it matter whether others see, know or care? It is enough to know He sees, and cares. Remember Jesus Christ when discouraged and tempted to feel the uselessness of doing honest work because those who are lax appear to obtain all the favors. Jesus never fails. Sanctify and hallow earthly callings by working for God rather than men, our earthly taskmasters. Apply all powers always, sell as unto the Lord, prepare cases as unto the Lord, charge rents and make repairs on houses as unto the Lord, make paint that will not sunburn or peel as unto the Lord, make brushes whose bristles will remain. Give of your best as servants of Christ.

THE NATURE OF OUR SERVICE.

Doing the will of God: A profession of faith is essential to our spiritual life; we must possess knowledge of what is right and seek constantly to add to this knowledge, but these begin-

ning steps are lost unless we do the will of God. Christianity implies activity. There is always something to be done as unto the Lord. Singing His praises is inadequate, giving will not suffice, we are to work and do the will of Him who has sent us. Christ was a collaborator with God. The completion of today's task will bring a new assignment for tomorrow. What is the will of God? Can we pray for light and guidance and yet let our wishes take precedence? When God actually speaks to us we will know it. A steady conviction of right, fitness, capacity and confidence is given. We know our decision is the will of God, and no vain personal hope or misguided judgment to bring regret. Christ demonstrated the possibility of doing God's will. Performance on our part requires love, humility, courage, and fortitude. The will of God makes greater demands than the will of men, but Divine strength goes with our assignment. Generally men will commend our service, even though they may be unwilling to go all the way with us.

The Scriptures leave us in no doubt as to how we may identify the will of God. There need be no uncertainty as to the workability of Gods task for us. "Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is (Eph. 5:17)." "Not every one who saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven (Matt. 7:21)." "For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister and mother (Matt. 12:50)." We are cautioned not to "live the rest of this time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God (I Pet. 4:2)" because "The world passeth away and the lusts thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever (I John 2:17)." Prayers of others bring clarity. "We do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (Col. 1:9)." Epaphras is said to have labored "fervently for you in prayers that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God (Col. 4:12)." "Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise (Heb. 10:36)." "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication (I

Thess. 4:3).” “The Lord make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ (Heb. 13:21).” The will of God is “that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men (I Pet. 2:15).” We have His assurance that He will never leave us to our own resources. Preceding verses indicate the armor of the Christian which is given us to fight the good fight of faith.

OBEDIENCE IS FROM WITHIN.

From the heart: Our motive and strength is from within. “Ye must be born again.” The rise and flow of desire and ability to do the will of God comes from a consecrated and renewed heart. No half way measure will suffice. “Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord (Jer. 3:10).” The Giver of every good and perfect gift furnishes the tools for us. “And I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord (Jer. 24:7).” The heart is the soil which feeds the soul. “Obey from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you (Rom. 6:17).” “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men, knowing that of the Lord we shall receive the reward of the inheritance (Col. 3:23, 24).” Obedience springs from the inner man, from a conviction of right, a dedicated purpose rather than some passing whim or easily stirred emotion. Christianity reaches the innermost recesses of our being and controls the manner of our service. If we will do the best we can wherever we are, some day God will show us where we are. Our present task is to do each detail as nearly perfect as we can, using His strength and working as unto the Lord. “I will praise the Lord with my whole heart (Ps. 111:1).”

VII.

CHRISTIAN GOOD WILL

"With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men."
—EPH. 6:7.

CHRISTIAN GOOD WILL.

With good will: Doing the will of God from the heart will express itself in faithful, cheerful service for one's fellowmen. A task may be unpleasant, an employer may be unchristian in attitude, assignment, scale of wage, working conditions, provision for disability and retirement, but this is no excuse for surly, indignant, murmuring, constrained or fearful service. The mind of Christ never leads a believer to murmur, brood, over or withhold labor. The indwelling presence of Jesus cleanses the imaginations of whatever may tend to continued review of grievances. A mind harboring dissatisfaction, hatred, and fancied ills soon causes imperfect work and blinds one to the seeing of any good in the person or condition under fire. Backsliding is imminent. Sin will soon be in control. Illwill or an absence of goodwill is a sin. The mind cannot be a vacuum. Illwill is like sour milk in a pan of sweet milk. No amount of sweet milk can ever turn sour milk sweet. A Christian workman or employer has mutual regard for the interests of the Master in treatment of each other. Both work as unto the Lord and under the watchful, everpresent and all seeing eye of the Heavenly Father. It is not necessary to understand such Divine supervision and ability to pick out and follow the movements of one individual in the millions of this inhabited globe. The fact has been attested and remains. The Lord saw Paul on the road to Damascus and called, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Every hair of our head is numbered. Not one of the countless sparrows can fall unobserved by God. We can hide behind no screen. The Lord knows when we fail to keep sweet and having promised us the strength of His spirit, He cannot excuse our failure to

demonstrate goodwill even under the most trying circumstances, and regardless of whether the other party or parties persecute, ignore, injure or curse us.

The sin of another is no justification for our sin. Illwill matched with illwill begets open war. Satan's tools are those who yield to illwill. As soon as we become conscious of resentment pray for God's power to withstand. Say, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Faith in God will bring victory. The struggle may be long and bitter, but victory and peace are assured. Goodwill is never to be extinguished by severity or circumstances. No follower of Jesus has any right to say, "My case is different." Repeat Jesus' words on the Cross, "Father forgive them, they know not what they do." Let workers and employers, let wives and husbands, let parents and children, let people and rulers, let relations and in-laws, let tenant and owners, live with goodwill begotten of God and rooted in lives surrendered completely to the will of God. One way to have a weedless wheat field is to plant so much wheat seed that weeds will find no rootage. A life busy with the Lord's work has little room for unprofitable illwill.

PRACTICAL POWER.

Doing service: Our service is to be that of a bondsman, who can do nothing else but serve. Those having lawful authority are representatives of God and, as such, have rights which entitle them to obedience and good workmanship. Poor workmanship harms the worker far more than the one who may be disappointed, cheated, or injured by it. Eye service, false advertising, misrepresentation of goods, insult God who helps us to do our best and rewards our efforts to be as near perfect as possible. God gives our real reward. Man's wages, honors and preferments pass with our years on earth, but God's approbation is for all eternity. Let us bask in the sunshine of His favor and be less concerned with what men can do unto us. Every detail of our work is to have the skill of a miniature etching and less of the great sweeps and long strokes of bill board display. God looks not so much upon external, outward beauty, splendor and greatness, as upon the heart of man. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Christians

are to be superior parents, workmen, children, citizens, foremen, maids, teachers, pupils, servants and mistresses. Our religion enters our life and transforms it by the renewing of our minds and rendering service as unto the Lord.

WINNING THE LORD'S APPROVAL.

As unto the Lord: "I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ (I Cor. 11:3)." My Lord manifested in the flesh, in the form of God; my Saviour and Redeemer, assigns my task through another. He fills my pay envelope with contentment, happiness, and knowledge that my work has pleased Him. The meanest service rendered to Him will receive his attention and prove that the Lord blesses. We know when the Lord withholds his blessing. We should also learn whether He is asking us through suffering and misfortune to check up our life, discover what is wrong and remedy the situation by a closer walk with God, by more faithful rendering of tithes, by witnessing for Him, and by more rigid observance of the claims of baptismal ordinances, church membership pledges, communion promises, or vows earnestly but hastily made. The Lord exercises His privilege of correction.

Our Christian task is to serve, not to be served; to labor not for earthly reward but heavenly approval of the Master workman. His presence should give courage and ability to rise above the temptation to do careless, indifferent, or resentful work, to putty defects, to place knotty timbers in hidden places, to use cheaper materials than specified, to lessen the proportion of cement and increase the amount of sand, to hurry work and paint over rotting wood, to give no spiritual help to a heart filled with sin, and attempt with much shouting, loud praying and conspicuous attendance upon religious services to draw attention to our virtues to the exclusion of our vices. God knows the secrets of our hearts. He searches the innermost recesses of our minds. Everything is revealed to God. He knows us and remembers we are dust. When we serve "as unto the Lord," the most galling yoke is made easy, and the heaviest burden is made light. Our life in Him lifts us above circumstance and discouraging routine. We

can rise above our problem when Jesus is consciously within us. His presence gives power to rise above environment and heredity to new heights of spiritual experience. Determine to stand for Him always, everywhere. The milkman, the laundryman, the bread man, the grocer, the delivery boy, the traveling salesman, the salesclerk, the cashier, the filing clerk can all witness for Him by doing their work for the Lord. How wonderful to be able to say, "I delivered so many rolls and loaves of bread today, but did not neglect to give the Bread of Life to some hungering for righteousness!"

God always directs those ready to be used of the Lord and leads them to the right person. The God who spoke to Pharaoh through Moses places words in our mouths, but we must be willing to be used. Let us be obedient children who will eat, drink, work, play, go, rest, speak or be silent according to His bidding. God must have all or nothing. We cannot serve two masters; we serve God or mammon. Worshiping the Lord on Sunday and prayer-meeting night and following Satan and self the rest of the time is contrary to God's plan and desire. The dog who tries to chase two hares loses both. Serve the Lord with singleness of heart, with undiverted power, with undivided mind—strong, eager, fresh, determined and ready to do the will of the Lord at all times in all things. Serve the Lord, dismiss the deceitful feeling of doing pretty well or better than the average without the Lord. Bring every thought into subjection to the Lord. Have faces shining with joy and thanksgiving at the opportunity of serving the Lord. There is need for more shining faces in the Lord's service. Too many face the battles of life with stern and forbidding countenances. Speak of "how wonderful the Lord has been today," and bring others into fellowship with the Lord. The soldiers of Alexander, inspired by their leader, marched through hardships without consciousness of want. Shall we do less with our Lord leading day by day? Forward! Serve with joyful hearts, give honor and glory to Jesus Christ.

OUR REWARD IS CERTAIN.

And not to men: How many think of what people will say and do? How many work with one eye upon their task and

the other on the audience to see if someone is watching or hearing. How many sing to the congregation, pray so as to have someone say, "That was a beautiful prayer"; preach to have members of the congregation say, "That was a wonderful sermon this morning." Work is to be to the Lord who gives talents, who rewards service, who determines health and length of life, who places opportunities in our hands. Those who work for Him have little fear about a raise of salary, holding a job, or finding a better position. Work "as to the Lord" demonstrates itself to such an extent that others are conscious of good work. Time may be needed, but time will tell. Time tells the difference between whitewash and deck paint. The capricious, unreasonable demands of men are immaterial in comparison with the approbation of God. God's workers do not need watching and inspection. Raphael required no critic to peer over his shoulder and give instruction; he painted from the heart. The Christian labors from the heart and not the head.

And this heart is what a little girl called a "born-again" heart. The nightingale sings regardless of a hearer or the approval or reward of an audience. The nightingale never says, "If you will throw a few crumbs my way, I will sing a few notes for you when the moon is high, and if you will throw a whole crust, I will sing my most beautiful song." The nightingale sings from a bursting throat because it cannot help it. It pours out music to a Creator who cares for the birds of the field. Will He not much more care for you, O ye of little faith? Let us serve God because we love Him who first loved us. Let us serve Him as a mother serves a child, scrubbing, washing, cleaning, mending, cooking, praying from morning to night, even though the child takes all, complains and gives nothing in return. Looking unto the Lord, serve Him by giving wholehearted service to men. Our reward is of God, not of men.

VIII.

OUR HOPE OF REWARD.

"Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." —EPH. 6:8.

A GOSPEL CERTAINTY.

Knowing: Work is to be performed as unto the Lord, our judge and real employer. Eyeservice is condemned as being unworthy of a Christian. Such an ideal is not easy of fulfillment. Many slips occur in mental attitudes. The conscience will frequently feel remorse, but recollection of God's sure rewards to the faithful will renew strength and establish those habits of Christlikeness capable of enabling us to win our reward from the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Christians know. This knowledge is positive and certain. Facts stand like Gibraltar. Fogs may hide the bold outlines for a season, but not for long. God who never fails to keep His word has promised us a sufficient and certain reward. Earthly masters may distribute slim pay envelopes, but Jesus promises eternal rewards which never perish. The world's wages remain in the world; Jesus' pay is carried into heaven. This we know. This certainty relieves us of this world's cares and gives us courage and peace. In Him "we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him (Eph. 3:12)." Jesus sees. Jesus understands. Jesus rewards our loyal service by giving us heart balm and satisfying mental pace. A clear conscience is worth more than the world's wealth. Paul reminds the submerged slave that God never fails to give adequate pay. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 1:7)." The more we know about some people the more disgusted we are apt to become; the more we know about God the happier we will be, for knowledge of Him brings certainties which never fade or become worthless.

WHAT IS YOUR MOTIVE IN SERVICE?

That whatsoever good thing: Work well done usually receives commendation from God and man, but God never fails to credit any good thing. We shall be satisfied with the account settled as we enter into glory. As co-workers with Him, our service for Him cannot fail to be good, and pleasing to Him. Earth's disappointments find their satisfaction in Heaven. Many poor upon earth will be rich in heaven. Our good things are God's things; we receive these good things by choosing what God has commanded. God is our real foreman. The world is His shop. We punch our time card as we confess Him before men. Death is quitting time, after which we go home to heavenly rest. Let us therefore labor, whether slave or master, for God's good. Our sole motive should be to serve Him. If we follow the things which are good, no good thing will he withhold from us. Let us "rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee (Deut. 26:11)." "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord (Ps. 92:1)." One came to Jesus saying "What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life (Matt. 19:16)?" He was thinking of the Ten Commandments and love toward God. Jesus advised him to sell all that he had and give to the poor. If we are ready to do good as God does good, our task will be revealed without question. The performance of this duty will remove many a fear and uncertainty. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad (II Cor. 5:10)." "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his father with his angels and then shall He render unto every man according to his deeds (Matt. 16:27)." "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap (Gal. 6:7)."

THE WILL OF GOD IS THE STANDARD OF GOODNESS.

And man doeth: We are to work as unto the Lord. Matt. 6:1-18 clearly describes two methods of service—unto men and unto the Lord—in three everyday expressions of Christian living—giving, prayer, and fasting. God's word is very

clear and final on these points. Those who primarily seek to please men shall fail and receive no reward of God, but those who work unmindful of what men may say, and seek to please only God, shall receive their reward in heaven. The motive and spirit of action are more important than the act. A man may pray in public because he feels helpless and in immediate need for strength from above, or he may pray because he wants men to see his sanctity. Our religion demands action as well as prayer. We may pray in secret and the Father will see and reward, but we must also pray with weapons of the spirit in our hands. We have work to do. The world judges the effectiveness of our prayers by our words, and works. Being a Christian implies a distinct work for Jesus which cannot be confused with the world's work. Attendance at church services and the duplex system of church support is just the first step in Christian service. Any pastor can add further steps in doing good for the Lord.

Listen to God's word for suggestions: "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest; for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil (Luke 6:35)." "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee, But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed: for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just (Luke 14:12-14)." God will "render to every man according to his deeds; to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life; But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile. But glory, honour and peace to every man that worketh good (Rom. 2:6-10)." "Cast not away therefore your confidence which hath great recompense of reward (Heb. 10:35)." "Thou renderest to every man according to his work (Ps. 62:12)." "For the work of a man shall he render unto him (Job 34:11)."

LOVE RECOGNIZED BY LOVE.

The same shall he receive: No good deed is lost. The good which we do is returned to us. We receive our full wages in another world. All good deeds performed in the name of the Master will be returned in a heavenly kingdom. Work for the Lord is rewarded both now and in the world to come. "Each shall receive of his own reward according to his own labour (I Cor. 3:8)." "Rejoice and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you (Matt. 5:12)." "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven (Matt. 6:1)." "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then will he render unto every man according to his deeds (Matt. 16:27)." The Lord pays amply and everlastingly for all Christian service. In confidence, therefore, face all difficulties, hardships, deprivations, and disappointments. Be willing with Paul to face all things for the hope which is set before us. "He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day (II Tim. 1:12)." The question to decide is this, Do we want pay from men or from God? Which gives permanent satisfaction? Which is most enduring? Shall we cast our bread upon the waters? Have we faith that it shall return to us after many days?

THE LORD REWARDS.

Of the Lord: God knows what we do and why we do it. He never fails to receive our service, acknowledge it, remember it and give reward. "My reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be (Rev. 22:12)." "Of the Lord shall ye receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ, but he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done (Col. 3:24, 25)." Some employees are too busy to remember Christian obligations concerning pay for labor performed; other managers leave reward as long as possible, hoping to receive good service without special inducements of cutting into profits. Some owners receiving all the profit of invested capital are so blind

as to feel that all employed by them should serve for the glory of service and the welfare of the firm, rather than for special reward. But this is not God's way. He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him, and He is a rewarder of those who are faithful unto death. Throughout the ages, heaven is being prepared for the elect. When you think of what God accomplished in the first six days of creation, what possibilities might unfold when He has unlimited time at His disposal.

This reward is generally understood to be received upon the Lord's return. Many Roman soldiers allowed their pay to remain undrawn until the expiration of their military service, when a tidy sum would be waiting their investment in home or business. This custom was probably in the mind of Paul, as he speaks of our reward in heaven. God keeps an accurate account of good deeds performed for love of Him or of His Son and proves to be a faithful paymaster. Nothing will He withhold from those who serve Him. The pay envelope of the Lord is never short. No one will depart muttering and complaining of God's unfair pay. Man may fail to reward; the church may not applaud or give credit for faithful service rendered; but God does not overlook faithful service. How glorious! Let us be patient for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. The reward withheld on earth will be extended in Heaven. Day by day we deposit treasure in heaven where moth cannot devour and the thief cannot enter. What joy this brings. It is the joy of a lover laying by for the wedding day; it is the joy of the betrothed adding piece by piece to her "hope chest"; it is the joy of the expectant mother, working upon delicate articles which her child shall wear; it is the joy of preparing our residence in a city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. "What has been done by servants of Christ in singleness of heart to Him, has been laid up on deposit," says Ellicott, "and is received again without loss by the doer as he enters into the joy of His Lord."

EACH WILL HAVE FULL JUSTICE.

Whether he be bond or free: Earth's distinctions vanish in heaven where there is neither Jew nor Gentile, male or female, bond or free. Christ died to save all who would believe upon

Him. He is no "respector of persons." "For by one spirit are we all baptised into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free (I Cor. 12:13)." "There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, born nor free, but Christ is all, and in all (Col. 3:11)." Social position is not recognized in heaven. There will be no social ladders to climb there. The slave's spiritual inheritance is equal to his master's. Our glorious liberty in Christ causes all to stand upon the same level before the judgment throne. How are we living? God does not condescend; why man? Let us place no distinctions on earth which God has not placed. Efficiency demands concentration, specialization, and segregation, but this does not exclude the mercy of God or deny Christian love and strength. This verse is sweet comfort to the slave and the oppressed; it is a challenge for those in authority to use their wealth, power, and industrial contacts as unto the Lord.

IX.

THE DUTIES OF A CHRISTIAN EMPLOYER

"And ye, masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with Him." —EPH. 6:9.

THE USE OF AUTHORITY.

And ye masters: Having spoken of the duties of servants or employees and the spirit which should characterize their service, Paul now turns to the employer, foreman or person in responsible authority and tells him how to apply the laws of Christ. The Bible clearly states God's wish for every grade of society. Loyalty to God demands very definite things. God's law rises above civil law. "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven (Col. 4:1)." The Christian master places God's desire and his Christian duties as an ambassador of God above individual rights. Society may impose various social levels, organized business, diagram its mode of operation, military discipline demand restrictions, but the church levels. The Mohammedan Mosque has floors at various heights for its worshippers, according to their class. The character, training and talent which brings a man from the ranks into positions of authority is apt to make him hard as steel, cold, rigid, unsympathetic, arbitrary and harsh. The man higher up, the board of directors, stockholders and others are making demands. Such a man is permitting himself to be a creature of circumstances. How then shall a Christian in positions of responsibility use his power? This question of industrial life has been a problem to many. Dangel answers by saying, "Equality of nature and of faith is superior to distinction of rank." The Christian master replies, seek a wisdom which is from above lest eye service and a muttering heart be labor responses; lest the rank and file of the working world be driven

from the church by what seems to be hypocrisy of worship and profession without practice. Masters assume the position of a light upon a hill. Their example can be the means of great good or great harm. God needs to be sought. A praying master will have Christlike shops and few walkouts and strikes.

THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS LABOR.

Do the same things: Do government codes come before the law of God? Shall regulations of unions produce conditions contrary to the teaching of Scripture? How reconcile or conciliate capital and labor. Can the lion and the lamb dwell in harmony? Is it possible for the laborer and the foreman to get along as brothers? Yes, it is, by applying the Golden Rule and doing to others as they would have others do unto them. This is God's way. But the will of God must be done from the heart. Insincerity is easily detected and condemned. Christian principles must be the spring of action, not the outer garment of justice, goodwill, equity and equality. "Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour, but shalt fear thy God (Lev. 23:43)." Mutual interest demands doing the same things to others that you expect them to do to you. The principle with which masters treat their slaves applies to all life's relationships involving authority and superior position. Parents and children, mistresses and maids, employers and employees, pastors and flocks, presidents and organizations, and governors and their electorate, can find the answer to their problems of administration in the scripture. To keep back wages is as evil as to withhold a part of a day's work by tardiness or idleness; sweat-shop conditions cry out against a proprietor with a suburban home, pure air and all the conveniences of scientific residence. Child labor cannot be excused upon the pretext of necessity of meager capital, a home of poverty or small margins of profit. We are our brother's keeper. God is asking shop foremen and managers, "Where is thy brother?" How are human beings being considered?" Does the Sermon on the Mount enter into consideration in administration. Be as good to employees as you require them to be to you. Put yourself in their place and see whether their demands are as unfair as

might appear at first thought. Let love for God and fellow-man rule the mind, pocketbook and heart. Time schedules and payrolls are to testify to God. The early church saw gross injustices in the treatment of slaves. Christianity offered them their first cheering hope. Have we, today, become only more refined in our inhumanity? Are the rules, permits and a long suffering public masks behind which we hide?

REGARD GOD'S WILL.

Unto them: To some who were confused in their thinking and more clouded in their practice, Jesus gave a searching parable. He turned the pages of the future and let them see questions to be faced on the Day of Judgment. At that day many would say, "Lord, when saw we Thee hungered. If we had only known it was You in want and need, the last cent would have been gladly given; principle would have been invested as well as interest in the Kingdom of God—but, not having this spiritual discernment, we failed." Jesus' answer was a note of warning. We never know the guise Jesus uses. Angels have been entertained unawares. Let us watch and pray lest we fail to recognize Jesus or His messengers and treat their approach with indifference or cruelty. Christ may come as a servant or employee. As masters exact definite things from their workers, so workers have equal rights to expect definite things from those over them. "Submit yourself one to another."

"Masters are to act towards their slaves," says Hodge, "with the same regard to the will of God, with the same recognition of the authority of Christ, with the same simplicity and good feeling which had been enjoined on the slaves themselves." Christ judges masters and slaves by the same standards of conduct. Read what the Bible has to say about masters' responsibilities to their workers. 1. Prompt payment of wages is due them: "At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it (Deut. 24:15)." 2. Consideration is due employes: "If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me; what then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visitest, what shall I answer him (Job 31:13, 14)." The mas-

ter is to refrain from using threats and deal with justice always. "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven (Col. 4:1)." Continue in prayer.

USE NO COERCION OR TYRANNY.

Forbearing threatening: Refrain from despotism or what might be interpreted as being despotism. "The Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour (Ex. 1:13)." Christ taught a better way to obtain the most from labor. "Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things (I Cor. 13:7)." Ill temper is not included among the fruits of the Spirit. Severity may be as uncalled for from the master as criticism from the slave. With what mercy ye judge it shall be meted out to you again. If mercy is expected from God, give mercy to man. Henry van Dyke writes of a man who builds his house in heaven by using the acts of this life as building material. Many employers are over-exacting and overbearing. Doubtless the carelessness and listlessness of employees has proved extremely vexing. So threats of dismissal, lowered wage, forfeiture of privilege, are the answer of tired nerves, a distracted mind, and an outraged sense of worldly justice. "Forbear threatening." Authority can be exercised without dominion. Courtesy, consideration and even-handed justice adorn a Christian office. Trust in God is proved by an unstrained quality of mercy.

Attempts to put people in their place, to rule by threats of punishments, by forfeits, cuts, reductions, changes only feed smouldering fires of hate which are apt to break out in disastrous rebellion and wasteful fury. Tyranny may be enforced for a season, but industrial revolutions eventually correct evils. The American Revolution was the voice of an overburdened people. Christ would walk with the master through the whirl of machinery as well as down the aisle of a beautiful cathedral. Christ would enter the darkest mine in the hearts of those in authority as well as sit upon a board of trustees to plan the fullest use of a church building. Jesus enters and follows every beat of that heart which is opened to Him. Employers, forbear threatening to pay no overtime, to

change from time to piece work; establish reasonable schedules, then think of each worker with the same individuality that you expect God to use in treating you before the judgment seat of God.

THE REASON FOR CHRIST-LIKE TREATMENT.

Knowing that your master: How carefully the Bible reasons on many things. We are cautioned not to take certain steps, then comes immediately the command to perform other opposite duties. The Christian is to be a tremendously busy individual. Satan is to have no opportunity to get a toehold through idleness. The realities of our faith are certain. Our Master in heaven will say, "Did you pattern your actions by what you ask me to do for you? You want your prayers answered, have you given careful consideration to the petitions of those under you?" The same Master governs servant and earthly ruler. Both stand in the same rank before God. "And I will come near to you to judgment, and I will be a swift witness . . . against those that oppress the hireling of his wages (Mal. 3:5)." How would God comment upon sweatshop labor? Christ is our real foreman, others are but figureheads. If executives perfectly applied the Golden Rule, even a factory might be a part of heaven on earth. Reverence for God is expressed in part by reverence for those made in the image of God.

Every master must give God an account not only of himself but also of his charges. Many act as though an accounting is due to none beside the auditor or the board of directors. The great Accountant is above. He asks, What have you paid? Under what conditions do your employees work, and have you tried to bring them to a saving knowledge of Christ; He queries, Has the pious deacon of Sunday been a cursing, laboring man on Monday. On an occasion the disciples spoke of the Lord as Master. Jesus admitted the propriety of the name by adding, "And so I am." In this independent day, we are apt to forget that Jesus is our Master as well as Savior. Shall we pray, "Master, what thinkest Thou of my task; wilt Thou say of my labor today, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, thou are entered today upon the book of life with a good record of service done in the Spirit of Christ'."

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

Also is in heaven: The Lord of all creation sits on His throne in heaven and rules and observes the actions of his creatures on earth. "But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons (Col. 3:25)." Some day the great Judge who appears to have overlooked will call time. Patience shall have been exhausted and He will come to punish and to reward. Therefore, "forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgive you, so also do ye (Col. 3:13)." Our citizenship is in heaven. Our present life is a training course in practical religion to fit us for heaven. Our breath is a stewardship. God has permitted you to be foreman; how have you used this office for the glory of God and the building of His kingdom? Have associates come nearer to the kingdom of God through association with you. As you move to and fro throughout the plant or office, can they see the Spirit of Christ voiced through you? Our Master may be in heaven, but He walks each step with us. He makes no mistakes.

NO FAVORITISM WITH GOD.

Neither is there respect of persons: God is not influenced by place, power or person. He seeth the heart. The widow's mite balances the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. "The Father, who without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work (I Pet. 1:17)." "Then Peter opened his mouth and said, of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34)." "But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors (Jas. 2:9)." How many sin in this respect! How consoling to know that the wrongs of earth will be righted in heaven! Faithful work unrecognized and unrewarded on earth will receive its due reward in heaven. "Pull' is not needed in heaven to receive the Lord's attention. "At His bar," remarks Hodge, "the question will be not what was done but who did it." "God will not acquit because a man is a slave or condemn because a man is a slave." Give God time enough and all wrongs will be righted. What will it all matter a hundred years from now.

Have patience, in due season we shall reap if we faint not. Pray for staying power. Think of Jesus, God's only begotten Son, and His treatment. With what relief even Jesus said, "It is finished." The task is done. I go to my Father and their Father, who judges with wisdom.

HAVE MUTUAL LOYALTY.

With him: We find liberty, equality and fraternity in Jesus. Neither riches nor poverty, education nor ignorance, influence nor isolation, master nor slave, influences Him. He looketh upon the heart of man. Faint not. Look to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith. Others may see a cog in a wheel, but God has numbered the hairs of your head. You seem lost in the vast recesses of a crowded busy city thoroughfare, but Jesus is following you. In industrial life you feel like bolt B-68490, but in the eyes of God you may be the hundredth sheep that was lost for which He left the ninety and nine. "For they all are the work of his hands (Job 34:19)." "For the Lord your God . . . regardeth not persons nor taketh reward (Deut. 10:17)." "For there is no respect of persons with God (Rom. 2:11)." "But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done and there is no respect of persons (Col. 3:25)." Since God has no respect for persons, why should we. If barriers exist, tear them down. Love the brethren.

X.

GOD-GIVEN POWER

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." —EPH. 6:10.

CONCLUDING THE MATTER.

Finally: Salvation is tested in all the various relationships of the home and shop, but it reaches all of life. A real struggle is to be experienced. Our salvation is won after a constant and unceasing warfare with the powers of evil having Satan as their captain. Only sublime courage, unwavering faith and never ending persistence can conserve what Christ has done for us in accepting us as Children of God. Life is a warfare; religion has its battles—in both, we must press towards the goal of the high calling which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. There are enemies to fight, a captain to fight for, a banner to fight under, and certain rules of war by which we are to govern ourselves. Hence fathers, mothers, children, parents, masters and slaves having done all that has been previously mentioned, are urged to be strong in the Lord during the days which lie ahead until the time of their calling. A conflict is inevitable. Temptation and sin cannot be avoided. Preparation is important. Salvation is not attained on flowery beds of ease or through seclusion, but in battle with severe setbacks, possible woundings and yieldings. Watch therefore. Be unceasing in vigilance lest the soul be stormed in an unguarded moment. As citizens of heaven, no earthly prince should take us from our destiny. Paul speaks from wide experience. Few could say with him, "Be strong." The vast majority are weaklings. But Paul's faith had led him to face all sorts of perils. These testings had hardened the fibre of his soul, caused him to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, and urged him to call as a man of strength to weaklings to remind them that God is no respecter of persons. Un-

limited resources were available. Courage is demanded of Jesus' disciples. No soldier faces any situation demanding more courage than that which confronts followers of Jesus.

EQUALITY IN CHRIST.

My brethren: While these two words are omitted in some manuscripts, they are very appropriate. We are not a vast army unrelated in this conflict except by a common cause; we are brothers in Christ, fighting side by side, under the leadership of the heavenly Father. "All one body we. One in faith and doctrine." Paul using this tie of fellowship and kinship in Christ appeals to the Ephesians to press on, making no compromise in this struggle with the old self, the temptations of the world, or the sins which so easily beset. When a great football game is to be played between two college teams, the wise coach gathers his men about him, outlines the probable plays which his men will face, and dictates the movement of each man if the opponent's strategy is to be broken up, and the home team is to emerge victorious. Paul collects the faithful about his prison letter and says, "You have a hard fight ahead. Your opponents are trained. They have many trick plays which they have carefully drilled. If you are to hold your ground, let me tell you what must be done. Every play can be broken up this way—put on the whole armor of God."

Christians may well emulate the football-huddle and counsel concerning a plan of attack against temptation and the next move. We have to have more than a desire to win. Our desire to fear God, serve Him, keep His commandments and win, is not enough. It is folly to unite with the church, give ourselves to Him and then build victory bonfires thinking the game of life is over. We are not free from the tempter's snares until our last breath has been drawn. Christ was tempted on the cross. Temptations face Christians on deathbeds. There is something beautiful, stimulating and Christian, in the way Paul, chief among the Apostles, and the outstanding religious leader of his day, calls the despised and lowly servant and slave his brother. This equality before God is the only plane upon which Christian work can be done. Have degrees, hold office, walk with dignity, possess ten talents, but be conscious

of a common sonship with God and a shared place prepared in heaven for all.

Then, too, all who believed on Jesus needed to band themselves into a close, harmonious comradeship. The church was facing many dangers. Disciples were being intimidated, imprisoned, thrown to the lions. Severer testings were ahead under the reign of Nero. Unknown, dangerous, and subtle spiritual foes were to be encountered. "To the mind of Paul the need for struggle was ever present," says Erdman, "and he never ceases to warn his readers of their peril, their duty, and their call to win for Christ the victory and to win from Him the crown." Christians must cease from evil and learn to do good.

MUSTER STRENGTH FOR THE CONFLICT.

Be strong: Strength was already theirs to use. Arms and weapons are for dress parade and battle. The test of a soldier is not his form when on parade, but his action in the midst of battle. As a cowardly soldier is despised, so also is a soldier of the cross who runs from his duty, and turns before the enemy. Be strong. They (Heb. 11:34) "out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens," because (Rom. 4:20) they were "strong in faith" and gave glory to God. The Greek word for strong means "to be made powerful." The present tense points to a maintenance of strength rather than an attaining of strength. Turning from sin to righteousness, from the world to Christ, turning from the old life and finding all things new in Christ Jesus, required a lot of courage, but now that the step has been taken and the oath of allegiance has been given, continue in loyalty and devotion to the Lord. Turn with Him. Follow the Cross to the end. Guard lest temptation blow souls like wintry blasts tumble autumn leaves; watch lest the tempter soften resolves and they be as plastic as a piece of dough in the hands of a baker; beware lest the force of worldly attractions and pleasures bend resolves as a great storm bends bulrushes to the direction of the current.

"Be strong"—but how? Are moral resolves to be built stone by stone, line upon line, and precept upon precept? The

ringing words of Joshua are challenging. "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee nor forsake thee Be strong and of good courage. . . This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein, for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have I not commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest (Josh. 1:5, 8, 9)." First century Christians needed this reminder. The world will always need it. The living roots of temptation to cowardly inaction remain in the human heart. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong (I Cor. 16:13)." "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus (II Tim. 2:1)." Though king of Israel and sheltered by his palace, David needed this help from above. Be strong and let your heart take courage, all ye that hope in Jehovah (Ps. 31:24). Let us therefore "be strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness (Col. 1:11)." David turned to his son Solomon upon whose shoulders was to rest the burdens of the kingdom, and said, "I go the way of all the earth, be thou strong and show thyself a man (I Kings 2:2)." When Israel had become idolatrous and needed a warning lest the anger of God come upon them, Asa speaks, "Be ye strong, therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded (II Chron. 15:7)." The glory of the new Zion was fading from the minds of those who had waited so long for their Messiah. So Isaiah voices this rallying message, "Say unto them that are of a fearful heart: Be strong, fear not: behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense. He will come and save you (Isa. 35:4)." When the second Temple was being rebuilt, the task seemed impossible of accomplishment. Trouble and discouragement were on every hand. The prophet Haggai was sent to give courage. "Yet now be strong, O Zerubabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua . . . ; and be strong all the people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: for

I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts (Hag. 2:4).” The holy city of Jerusalem had been destroyed because of faithless worshipers; a repentent people had been led back to start life over again; true worship of Him was resumed; but new walls rose slowly, enthusiasm was waning, backs were tired. Was it worth while? Was the ideal worth striving for? Zachariah is sent to fan courage and idealism, recall the fervency of sacred religious vows, and the depth of a believer’s gratitude to God. “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, “Let your hands be strong . . . that the temple might be built (Zech. 8:9).” Zachariah seems to be saying, “Be as faithful to Jehovah as you expect Him to be to you. Be not weary in well doing for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not.” I would say unto you, ‘Let God come. Rouse yourself to that pitch when first you followed the sawdust trail, or stood before the altar of the church to give yourself to the Lord. Get back to the promise you made on bended knee that if your loved one was spared, you would be true to God all your days. Temptations are to be faced. The battle is on. Fight the good fight of faith. Stand in your place like a man.’ ‘Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin.’

THE SECRET OF SPIRITUAL STRENGTH.

In the Lord: These words or their equivalent occur thirty-five times in this letter. Why? Human nature is always the same. Self-confidence leads to assumed responsibilities without the sanction of God’s word. We become so anxious to go ahead that we forget God, and are unmindful of the fact that strength for the Lord’s battle is from the Lord. He furnishes the arms to be used. The modern soldier does not furnish his own arms. His country tests the best equipment for the particular warfare to be fought and furnishes it free to the one bearing arms. Italian armies invading Ethiopia were given the most modern implements of arms; the Ethiopian tribesmen came with bows and arrows, spears and shields, each fashioned by themselves. It is as difficult for spears to hope to attain victory against modern rifles as for human capacities to win victory in spiritual battles. Our strength is from the Lord and from Him only. We face a battle to the death. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh

about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren, that are in the world. But the God of all grace make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you (I Pet. 5:8-11)." Seek strength from the only infinite, all powerful, incomprehensible and almighty God. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you (John 15:4-7)."

The strength of the arm is strength from the body. Our vitality is from Christ who is the head of the Body which is the church of God. United to Him we have access to all the resources of heaven. Ask and ye shall receive. Knock and it shall be opened unto you. Fellowship with God is power. An independent life is doomed to spiritual weakness and impotency. Christ has always been and always will be the inexhaustible and always available source of power to all who believe on Him. Our "sufficiency is of God. In him we live and move and have our being. The cause of our strength is in the Lord." Take what is offered by Him and be strong—strong for service, strong for suffering, strong for fighting, strong for conflicts, within and without, by day and by night. As gravity holds particles in a solid mass, so the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord will bind our hearts together in Christian love and give unbelievable, unexperienced strength.

Knowing our sufficiency is of God, we can face temptations with assurance of success. It would be folly to deliberately place ourselves in the way of temptations because of this. Evil communications corrupt good manners. The drink habit has been resumed by many who have thought themselves strong enough to stand against the smell of liquor by will power. Such have fallen. Lord Nelson gave his command this challenge on the critical day of Trafalgar, "England ex-

pects every man this day to do his duty." Joseph Reed of Revolutionary fame gave this answer to those who by lure of gold would make him a traitor to his country, "I am poor, very poor, but poor as I am, the king of Great Britain is not rich enough to buy me." What is your answer to Satan—"Get thee behind me, Satan," or do you, with Eve, take what he offers, hoping that God will be unobservant or merciful. Be strong in the Lord. Paul is not foolish enough to say, "Be strong" without adding, "in the Lord." He meant be strong in prayer; be strong in faith; be strong in work; be strong in self-sacrifice; be strong in fighting for the Lord; be strong in doing the right when it is known; be strong to faithfully do each day's task as the Lord reveals it; be strong to say no. Live when alone as though the whole world and God were watching what is being done.

SPIRITUAL POWER.

And in the power: This is no time for sloth, fear, or half-hearted service. Work is to be done for Jesus. Satan, opposed to God, desires to defeat His wishes wherever possible. When Satan tries to command us, where will we stand? Choose ye this day whom ye will serve. For many, this is a daily choice. Follow so closely, be so absorbed in the work of the Lord, that temptation has no angle of approach. Satan never withdraws. Those not actively pursuing the Lord's work must expect trouble. Recall how soon Satan tempted Noah, saved from the flood, and lured him to drunkenness. Terah (in the descent of Christ) was tempted by Satan to do what others about him were doing and we find him a worshiper of idols. Instead of continuing on the command journey to Canaan, Terah stopped and died in Haran. Abraham, blessed by God, faced a famine in the land, and yields to the temptation to go to idolatrous Egypt and find food instead of believing God would take care of him. In Egypt, Abraham calls Sarah his sister instead of his wife because of fear lest harm might come to him through the beauty of Sarah whom Pharaoh desired. Satan still remains at our elbow. Nothing but the power of God can save us. "Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts (Zech. 4:6)."

This power gives a ready answer to the wiles of Satan. "I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord . . . to declare unto Jacob his transgression (Micah 4:8)." Have we experienced (Eph. 1:19) "what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power"? The early Christians discovered (Acts 1:8) they would "receive power when the Holy Ghost was upon them." Being of one accord in one place, and having received this power from on high, they spoke with authority delivering a God-given message instead of a man made message. "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all (Acts 4:33)." Let us fight in the power of His might.

GOD OUR STRENGTH.

Of his might: His might is our might. Because He is able, we are able. The power of His resurrection will be felt by us who are (Eph. 3:16) "strengthened with might by his spirit in the inner man." With Moses we can say, (Ex. 15:2) "The Lord is my strength." Samuel testifies (II Sam. 22:33), "God is my strength and power; and he maketh my way perfect." David prays with confidence for his people. "The Lord is their strength and he is the saving strength of his annointed (Ps. 28:8)." He had found (Ps. 46:1) that God was his "refuge and strength a very present help in time of trouble." He could ever praise God with these words of faith, "My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever (Ps. 73:26)." "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee, in whose heart is the ways of them (Ps. 84:5)." Thank God for Him (Eph. 1:3) "who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places," who (Eph. 2:6) "has raised us up together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." We have strength, power and might when we are united to Him who is the head of the body. His might becomes our might. His strength shall be made perfect in weakness (II Cor. 12:9). If ye be risen with Christ seek those things which are above.

The effect of receiving this divine ability will be to free us from fear of wrong. We will be so dependent upon Him

that we cannot live without Him, or rest apart from Him. There will be no fear of those who would kill the body. In His strength and for Him, we will attempt the impossible, brave all dangers, take all hazards, speak boldly, testify of that which we have seen and heard, stand out upon the promises of Christ, come apart from the world, and run straight the course which has been set before us. The power of His might will keep our minds, hearts and bodies clean; the power of His might will cause us with Paul to rise above physical environments and take comfort in communion with Christ; the power of His might will reclaim us like desert stretches and cause us to bear fruits of repentance, service and confession. Put on the whole armor of God. "Let me not be ashamed, O Lord; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave (Ps. 31:17)."

XI.

THE ARMOR OF GOD

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."—EPH. 6:11.

OUR TASK.

Put on: Satan and God have ever been at warfare. Satan is aggressive. The Christian is never allowed to have peace even in the cloister. But the believer is not left defenseless nor alone to depend upon his own resources. The Captain of our Salvation has planned the strategy of battle and the best tested equipment. Victory is assured if the proper weapons are used. The commissary department of an army may purchase and supply nourishing food, but the soldier has to go to mess and eat it. The supply department of an army may secure and distribute equipment to each man according to his post and duty, but if the enemy is to be vanquished, ammunition must be fired with deadly effect. God, the only Begotten Son of God, and the Holy Spirit, working in harmony and conjunction, have devised the implements of warfare against their adversary and our adversary—the devil; while these are offered all who unite with the Lord to battle Evil, we are to put on the armor, take the guns from their racks, put ammunition in cartridge belts, strap them about our waist, and be ready for the enemy. Faith, purity and love battle unbelief, lust, and hate. The battle is on. Now is the time to put on the whole armor of God. This means—put on Christ, and be clothed with nothing less than Divinity—His righteousness, purity, love, forgiveness, mercy and justice. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh (Rom. 13:14)."

This "putting on" takes place upon baptism with the Spirit of God, which may or may not be experienced at the moment of baptism with water. "For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ (Gal. 3:27)." We are

aware of what we are doing, and must consciously and deliberately do what we are commanded by God to do; the rite and act is solemn and involves an oath of undying allegiance to our God. "But let us who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation (I Thess. 5:8)." We are to take, not make; put on, not devise. God has provided the tools for our defense, we do not have to worry about inadequate, antiquated, or ineffective equipment. The question is, "Have we appropriated and accepted all that God has deemed essential for proper defense and offense? To avoid being desperately wounded, captured or losing our citizenship which is in heaven, take the armor of God.

Life is to be lived in hostile territory, besieged and surrounded by evil. Constant guard by day and by night needs to be kept. Abraham was able to free Lot from his captors because he took advantage of the Oriental habit of drinking and relaxing during the nights after a well-fought battle; dividing his handful of men, a night attack put the enemy to rout and flight. "My soul, be on thy guard." Put on and keep on the armor of God. "Possess our possessions." The motto of the volunteer is "Defense, not defiance;" the motto of the soldier is "Defense and defiance." A military axiom concludes that the army always on the defensive will soon be vanquished. The believer in Christ who rests in Zion occupies his pew, pays his pledge, and performs only these quiet services for his Savior, needs to add aggression and defiance of evil. The tolerated evil will soon be the prevalent and uncontrolled evil. The permitted sin unknowingly draws us as Sodom lured Lot into the gates of the city to share its pleasures and capture. Only when we have put on the armor of Christ, and march with a clean heart washed in the blood of the lamb can we be safe from alarm and danger.

"The faithful disciple of Christ is secure in fidelity to the truth, in the power of purity, in the peace which garrisons his heart, in the love of God and goodness, in his pervasive righteousness, in his fellowship with heaven, in his faith and hope laying hold of eternal life." For defense, put on the armor; for defiance, put on the armor. We must grant no quarter to sin, but challenge its right to exist. No income from its licen-

sure will justify its existence, no attempted segregation of its activities will provide a remedy. Sin breaks all promises and agreements. It regards treaties as scraps of paper; we dare not accept its promises of good conduct as warrant of toleration. Christ dealt uncompromisingly with sin. It is war to the death. No mercy can be shown. Sin cannot be spared. God commanded Israel to destroy the enemy. Christ did not change this command.

OUR SPIRITUAL DEFENSE.

The whole armour of God: Every part of the assembled equipment is prepared, made, tested and supplied by God. It is not like those automobiles which use parts of other cars which may not have the same standard of excellence as their own product. God's armor bears the trade-mark of God. It carries His name and with that mark all that God has ever stood for in the world's conflict with evil. From the day of Adam, God has always risen triumphant. Satan has never been conqueror for long. However, the whole armor is needed for self-defense and subjugation of the enemy. "Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light (Rom. 13:12)." God and light are synonymous. Darkness and Satan are one. Light causes darkness to flee. Both cannot occupy the same space at the same time. We can prove ourselves as ministers of God in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, and in fastings—by (II Cor. 6:7) "the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left." Our means of defense and offense are not of ourselves, neither is the strength for the conflict from ourselves. It is from God who, changing the heart, gives the power of a clean heart and a mind given over entirely to the Lord and His work.

Christ came to earth to make men confident of His knowledge of our circumstances and His ability to provide a way of escape. He was in all points tempted as we are, yet was without sin. How did He do it? What does he say about the way to overcome the world? He said to His disciples, "I have overcome the world." We are overcome by the world. Our bondage is as irksome as Israel's in Egypt; but who will free

us from our hard taskmaster and our slavery to sin? Is our predicament due to our use of only a part of a Christian's resources, or our defense with handmade weapons? Our failure surely is not God's inadequacy. He is sufficient. Put on the whole armor of God. A part will not suffice. Italian soldiers in the rough cactus-infested terrain of Ethiopia could not advance far with a good helmet but no shoes; or a tropical uniform but water from a disease-filled water-hole. The soldier of Christ is not expected to retreat. The foe is to be faced and driven back, step by step, and pursued until driven from possibility of future attack.

Of the six pieces of armor mentioned, none are for the back. The girdle, breastplate, sandals, shield, helmet and sword meet every problem. No opening can be found for a fatal thrust by our adversary. As disciples of the Lord and members of His church, have we left our eyes, ears, tongue, mind, heart, body exposed to the enemies' temptations? Wherein do we fail to realize the power of God and a victorious life? Are we worldly Christians or dedicated Christians? Abraham got into trouble when he stopped building an altar at every stopping place and omitted worship of his God. When we neglect the sentinels of devotion, close our Bibles, ignore the warnings of our prayers, and starve our spiritual life by withholding our tithes to the Lord, trouble is certain. Let us expose no part or expression of our religious life to attack. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 13:14)." Only so can we be given power to overcome.

Our armor is of God and is God Himself. How many other expedients has the world tried! Seclusion, asceticism, celibacy, poverty, ritual, the law, custom, and self-satisfaction. What can save my soul from sin? "Nothing but the blood of Jesus." My self-made, self-devised method of attack, my self-created defense will not be effective. Imagine an army with each private determining his uniform, equipment, and point of attack. David tried it and acknowledged his failure and despair, when he cried (Ps. 35:1-3), "Plead my cause, O Lord, with them that strive with me: fight against them that fight against me. Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for my help, Draw out also the spear, and stop the way against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I am thy salvation."

The battle is the Lord's; all we have to do is to place ourselves without reserve in His hands.

THE REASON FOR ARMOR.

That ye may be able: All have crossed swords with Satan. His persistent, subtle temptation weakens. Caught off guard and unprepared, Satan's allurements and charms prove successful. If Satan is able, God is even more able. When Jesus said, "Get thee behind me, Satan," Satan obeyed. When Peter realized his cowardice and inability to stand even before a damsel and own his Lord, and humbly depended upon Divine power to save him from himself, he became a pillar of the church, an aggressive apostle, and willingly died a violent death rather than yield to ease or the inclination of the moment. Eternal happiness is of utmost importance. Better derision, pain, lack and want of a few luxuries for a brief span of years on earth than loss of heaven. What would absence of worldly interests matter in a hundred years? A Christian is to be able, sufficient, confident of victory, and have assurance through Him. A defeated believer is no credit to the Lord. The Lord taught us to pray daily, "Deliver us from evil."

Satan was as real a person to Jesus as were the twelve apostles, the misuse of the Temple area, and the hostility of the scribes and Pharisees. His prayer warns us to be on the lookout for certain defeat unless we are able by His grace to face the devil with a heart, understanding and will established and hardened as a Damascus blade to withstand strain. Damascus steel was known for its piercing quality, temper and pliability. The armor of the Christian enables him to face his task, his world and his problem with the certain knowledge that with God for him and watching over him, no temptation will be faced that is over and above what can be borne in the name of Christ. This confidence is better than the doubt, defeat, sorrow and helplessness of life without Christ. What is worse than to be in a boat drifting with no oars, sail or method of directing it from the certain doom of hurling over Niagara? What is more exhilarating than to have a good motor, plenty of fuel, a sturdy craft, spare parts, ample food, sound health and charted familiar waters? Who would volun-

tarily choose the drifting boat to the security of a powerful launch? Yet how many poor deluded souls are going through life defeated in their desire to overcome habits which have made them slaves; habits which are taking them to eternal doom, unable to stem the desires of their wants, powerless to save them from future crime, disgrace and eternal punishment. Put on the armor of God if ye would be able to stand.

RESIST THE DEVIL.

To stand: "Stand" is the key-word of this command. We are to hold ground against all comers; not an inch is to be yielded. Is this your experience? Have you lowered standards? Are you doing today what you said you never would do? Are you as clear and positive in your convictions as before? Do you tolerate now what formerly you would not condone? Has your Christian experience given you the ability to hold your ground and hold out against all odds? Are you saying, "What is the use; others are doing it, I guess I will do so also." "Submit yourselves therefore to God, Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (Jas. 4:7)." Pray the Father for strength to stand (II Cor. 2:11) "lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices." "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour (I Pet. 5:8)."

Through Jesus we can have a victorious life. The struggle will result in complete vindication of our stand for righteousness, right and the truth. Are we in the struggle now? If there is quiet, is it because we have already been overcome with evil and do not know the danger faced? Have warnings ceased to alarm us? No man knows the day or the hour when the son of man cometh. The story is told of a man who neglected to repair his roof, giving as an excuse that when it was dry the roof did not leak, and when it rained, he could not fix it. Is this our spiritual condition? Death seems so far away, Life is so full, pleasures are so sweet, health is vigorous. So much time seems to remain in which to face the issue of eternity and confess our sins that for the present we decide to

follow the crowd and yield to sin. Broad is the way which leadeth to destruction, and narrow and straight is the way which leadeth unto life.

BITTER ENMITY IS TO BE FACED.

Against the wiles: Satan is a crafty, cunning, scheming, deceitful, calculating, and subtle enemy who seeks by snares, strategy, and deliberate methods to enmesh us in his toils. Force and fraud are used to undermine faith in Christ and loyalty to Jesus. Thirty pieces of silver was sufficient to lure Judas. Lack of previous experience and unfamiliarity with bodily resurrection led the disciples to return to their nets. Organized assaults in the halls of legislation remove good laws on the pretext of their being puritanical, blue or unprogressive. Progress is frequently a bright, gleaming tool to perform the work of Satan. At times, its perverted emphasis has proven the greatest handicap to the missionary seeking to bring the gospel message to those who sit in great darkness. Satan offering personal advantage to the tempted conceals his purpose to frustrate the will of God and limit the spread of the Kingdom in the hearts of men. This deception proves a lure to singe the wings of our moth who desires to see the bright and appealing gleam in surrounding darkness.

Satan appealed to Eve, surrounded with all the beauty and plenty of the Garden of Eden, under the inference that God was withholding something good in the forbidden fruit. His approach is not new, and yet this age-long, world-old scheme is still an effective weapon against believers. Right is still and always will be opposed by Satan until he has been placed where he can no longer harm men. Therefore, stand against his wiles and machinations. Satan leads a host he has equipped to fight, while God waits to lead those whom He has equipped. Stand therefore against him (II Thess. 2:9) "whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders," against (II Cor. 11:3) "the serpent who beguiled Eve through his subtlety," against (Rev. 12:9) "Satan who beguileth the whole world," against Satan who shall be bound for a thousand years.

The Gospel warns of the wiles to be expected. He (II Cor. 4:4) "blinds men to the gospel." His agents (II Cor. 11:13-

15) transformed themselves into apostles of Christ—Satan himself is transformed into “an angel of light.” This prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2) “now worketh in the children of disobedience.” Satan (Rev. 12:9) has “deceived the whole world.” Knowing this danger, his power and wiles, let us meet him as the lad David faced the towering giant Goliath, “in the name of the Lord” and the power of His might. “The Christian life is a battle,” says Brown, “and you are on a campaign. There may be days of quiet in your life, but you are perpetually liable to invasion. There is only one safe course for you, you must be fully armed, from top to toe, and sleeplessly vigilant Our life is a tremendously serious business, a critical business, no holiday excursion, but a great campaign, in which carelessness, boastfulness and understanding of the enemies’ forces may lose or gain everything, according as he is faultless or earnest and faithful. It is a campaign that has evil days—its hardships and its agony.”

OUR REAL ADVERSARY.

Of the devil: Because of the devil, sin entered the world and it has never left the world. We cannot stand against him without God’s help. The saints found themselves helpless without the power of the Spirit. “We would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again, but Satan hindered us (I Thess. 2:18).” Man cannot match Satan’s strength, cunning, and strategy. Man has but a few years, Satan has had the history of the world in which to intelligently, carefully lay plans to capture the souls of men. The prince of the powers of darkness, and the ruler of this world can only be matched by God. “If he is the author of moral and physical evil,” says Hodge, “the great enemy of God, of Christ and of his people, full of cunning and malice; if he is constantly seeking whom he may destroy, seducing men into sin, binding their minds and suggesting evil and skeptical thoughts; if all this is true, then to be ignorant of it, or to deny it, or to enter on this conflict as though it were a struggle between the good and bad principle in our hearts, is to rush blindfold to destruction.” The devil and God face each other in battle. They never fight

side by side as comrades. "The prince of this world (John 12:31)," the "God of this world (II Cor. 4:4)," and "the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2)," seeks your soul. Whether he gains control depends upon you. Cry to the Lord for help and flee to His refuge. Go to Him, and in the shelter of His arms, you will find safety for your soul. Put on the whole armor of God, if ye would stand against the wiles of the devil. Stand in the power of His might.

XII.

INVISIBLE ENEMIES

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."
—EPH. 6:12.

PERSONAL COMBAT.

For we wrestle: A holy war is being waged by all believers of Jesus against an invisible army of foes—spiritual enemies difficult to combat because of their qualities and being. As we wrestle with nature to win a livelihood from her and to dispel our ignorance, so we grapple with evil to overcome evil with good. Christians face a hand to hand and foot to foot contest with enemies as closely grappled as two wrestlers contending for the mastery. Evil seeks to be master. Christ also stands at the door and knocks. The struggle is constant and bitter to the death. Neither Satan nor God surrender. Every individual must recognize this situation and prepare for life's spiritual conflicts as carefully as the wrestler who strives for mastery. The Christian does not fight with men. Paul had no grudge to settle with his captors, his guards, and his jailers. He was fighting Satan and Satan's angels who were bartering for the souls of men. As we enter life's arena to contend against spiritual forces, success depends upon our vigor and constant alertness. Jacob prayerfully wrestled with God (Gen. 32:24-29), to gain the victory over his passions and worldly desires. Each day brings some conflict and possible defeat or victory. Satan does not relax his vigilance or efforts to overthrow believers. There is an inward contest between known duty and desires of the flesh. Frequently, purpose to do the will of God raises the white flag, capitulates or surrenders. There is a constant struggle against temptation to return a meanness for a meanness, to cling to possessions to the exclu-

sion of the commanded tithe to God, to indulge in the lust which entices, and to forget the responsibilities of the Kingdom of God. An innumerable host of outward temptations also demand attention and struggle. The claims of God's kingdom are opposed to selfishness, personal gain, and lust for power. Our task is to establish justice, mercy and holiness in the name of God and by the power of His spirit. "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. (I Cor. 9:25)."

NEGLECT NO PRECAUTION.

...

Not against flesh and blood: It is hard enough to face men, women and children and be tempted by them to act other than in the spirit of Christ; it is never easy to do what we know Christ wishes done; to submerge our feelings, resentments and chafings and forgive as Christ forgives. But to face unseen spirits of evil and know that Satan works through inclinations which appear from nowhere, makes the task infinitely harder and necessitates spiritual weapons of defense. Our opponents in the street, shop, school, church and home have flesh and blood. We see them and hear them. But greater difficulties than these face the Christian. Our liability to sin, our inherent sin, our susceptibility to fail, are known to Satan who lingers in the background and subtly speaks through friends and companions. He rarely speaks except through others. To our faces there is friendliness, to our backs there is opposition. But Satan stands in the background and schemes. We could plan a defense against men, but against spiritual forces we can hope for victory only with Divine instruments.

Paul realized this fact and prepared himself. "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood (Gal. 1:16)." The high calling to immortality requires more help than can be given by mortal flesh. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption (I Cor. 15:20)." Israel faced flesh and blood in Canaan—giants must be driven out. The Philistines were real. We face giants in the grill, gambling, political intrigue, immorality, greed, pleasure, laziness, and still more subtle, insidious, deadly powers of evil. Paul faced wild beasts, howling mobs, angry Jews, a vicious Demetrius, but the Spirit of

God enabled him to see Satan as the real antagonist. Righteousness was fighting unrighteousness. Good was in grips with evil; purity was held in foulness. God alone could bring up reserves. Spiritual forces alone could overwhelm the hosts of Satan and the natural channels of his appeal. A sanctified will is stronger than hard muscles; God-given convictions of right are more powerful than swords or bayonets. Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Class distinctions, race prejudices, family feuds, customs of indifference, or recognized practices are no excuse for being blind to the real issue. Our antagonist is Satan, not flesh or blood. The voice of Judas betrayed Christ, but Satan was the real betrayer. Satan planted greed in the mind of Judas. This same Satan moves to and fro in the world and will continue to be active until he is cast out and is placed beyond the possibility of tempting man.

ORGANIZED SPIRITS OF EVIL.

But against principalities, against powers: After giving the negative, Paul turns to the positive. The battle is not with men and things but rather with unseen, yet real, powers, rulers of spiritual hosts, and spiritual wickedness. These hosts are arrayed against each other as in any earthly battle. There is organization, authority, direction, strategy, and careful planning. Darkness and light face each other. Fallen angels occupy positions of authority under Satan. Princes of the first rank rule in this realm of evil; wicked potentates have been invested with Satans authority. Both Christ and Satan have angels. These powers are worthy of our respect; every moment must be carefully guarded. All of God's armor is needed or we will be vanquished like Achilles who died for lack of complete protection. Evil spirits are real, numerous, and powerful antagonists. Christ recognized them and addressed them as persons (Matt. 13:19, 39; Luke 10:18; John 12:31). The apostles spoke of the evil powers of Satan. Bitter experience tells us that Satan is working in the hearts of men. Those capable of great service could not be as devilish as many are unless an unseen, unrecognized power was making them act contrary to their best judgment and interest. Judas betrayed His Lord with no apparent qualms of conscience, but when he came to himself, remorse led to self-destruction.

Christ was able to see the real tempter, so bore no malice against those who opposed Him. Let us follow the example of Christ. "The god of this world has blinded the minds of them which believe not, that the light of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them (II Cor. 4:4)." A sinister world surrounds us; complex forces are arrayed against us; moral evils lie in wait to prey upon us. They seek our inward bulwarks and heart defenses, they work wherever good would triumph. Be not overcome with evil but overcome evil with good. When evil thoughts, passions, desires, and doubts assail, call Him who is Lord of lords and Him who will eventually triumph over the hosts of evil.

ORGANIZED POWERS OVER THE WORLD.

Against the rulers of the darkness of this world: Evil rulers exercising their authority in this present world are mentioned here. God's people are arrayed against mankind in general. Satan is frequently called the "Prince of this world." His subjects are deluded, ignorant, and shortsighted, or they would not continue to serve him. As long as they can be kept in ignorance and darkness, so long they will serve him, but when they come to the Light and follow Him who is light they will no more want to live in darkness than a person would voluntarily live in a dark dungeon in preference to a beautiful room flooded with sunshine and fresh, fragrant air. Those who yield to these powers of the earth are alienated from God. Their zeal in spreading doctrines of infidelity, ungodliness and mammon worship is distasteful to God for it alienates His people from Him. The children of Israel were beguiled into idolatry until they resented the warnings of the prophets. The drunkard resents the publicity and activity of prohibition workers. Vice fights vigorously for self-maintenance. Satan has made this present world a place of darkness, sin, woe, death and delusion. Jesus seeks to transform it into a place of light, joy, righteousness and a preparation for heaven. Jesus recognizes the powers of darkness in hostile leaders (Luke 22:53). As He commanded Satan to get behind Him, so He would have us address dark agents of evil. Pray for the ability to distinguish between good and evil; to live in light

instead of darkness; to follow Him as captain of our salvation instead of the rebellious fallen angel from heaven; to recognize the conflict between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of this earth. As Satan tempted Jesus with this kingdom (Luke 4:2), so he will tempt us. The kingdom of this world has been delivered to Satan until the day when this Prince of the world shall be cast out. The Bible frequently mentions Satan as a world ruler (Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Lu. 4:6; II Cor. 4:4). His authority though usurped is real, as real as a pretender to the throne who sits upon the throne. Do not be blind to or minimize the power of Satan or his eagerness to win converts. There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repents, but there is also rejoicing in Satan's camp over a saint who has deserted the ranks of God. Why add to the numbers of the drunkard, profligate, criminal and diseased who follow in Satan's camp?

UNCEASING EVIL ACTIVITY.

Against spiritual wickedness: Our foes are not always seen or heard. Satan is a cunning antagonist. He visits the worshipper on bended knee, the sleeper in his dreams, the one blessed with plenty or visited with poverty. Evidences of his "dishonesty, craftiness, and handling the word of God deceitfully" are given in II Cor. 4:2. Contest both the rank and authority of these wicked spirits. "These hosts are not mere elements or personifications and physical movements," says Macpherson, "e. g. wind, storm, earthquake, lightning. They are under the control of a powerful spirit as their prince, but their own nature is similar to his, each a miniature of himself The God and prince of this world has around him hosts, whose nature, like his own, is spiritual, and who are capable of ruling and severally advancing in their different provinces, the interests of the kingdom of darkness. They are not merely a multitude of forces at the prince's command, but they are a host of spiritual powers, by nature wicked as their leaders. Therefore wickedness is the natural expression of their being and they are absorbed in this task constantly." It behooves us to stop and locate the inroads of spiritual wickedness in our midst. Has the material overcome the spiritual? Do we live in an unlifting fog? Is Sunday the Lord's day or Satan's

day? Is wealth a stewardship account or money being hoarded for selfish purposes? The difference between silk and cotton may be the difference between God and mammon. Satan even enters the sacred hour of prayer.

THE DWELLING PLACE OF EVIL SPIRITS.

In high spirits: Heavenly places are the abode of God's and Satan's hosts. The Jews had various heights for the heavens. God and His armies always occupied the highest. But according to the Jewish belief the atmosphere in which men dwelt was the realm of Satan. For this reason mankind was unusually susceptible to the temptations of the evil one. While we do not accept this view, we cannot escape the feeling that we are constantly under the watchful eye of Satan, who waits in the grass for an unsuspecting prey, or who like a tiger hidden in the branches of a tree, poises with switching tail and glittering eyes to pounce upon passing prey. Our adversaries are important. We dare not trifle with them. Our whole atmosphere is peopled with fallen angels. The universe contains them. We cannot flee nor hide from them nor be safe except in the arms of Jesus. "Other refuge have I none." These celestial intelligences can only become less dangerous if we put on the whole armor of God. Defenses of the will, good works and charitable enterprises, are paper shields. But the armor of God can stand against all weapons of these powers in high places.

These powers are nearer than we think. From their point of advantage above us they find us at their mercy unless Christ is within us. They tempt us, remembering that we are dust and kin of Adam. He who was in all points tempted like as we—but without sin—waits to answer our cry for help. If we remain in Satan's world we are exposing ourselves to the danger of being caught in a net which will ensnare us. Evil associations corrupt good manners. Paul contrasts heaven with earth; the realm of the unseen with the seen, the spiritual with the material, the temporal with the eternal. "We are dealing with soul combats, with spiritual agents of evil, occupying a sphere of action invisible and practically boundless." The Christian is always the object of attack and will remain so to the end of the world. Thoughts and spirits in "heavenly

places," committed without reserve to the things of God, can cope with evil.

The Christian life always has been a separated life. Let us lift up our heart and mind to God lest we be tempted to go astray. "Never through cowardice seem to sanction that against which you have set yourself," counsels Henry Drummond. "In all your transactions maintain a high and honorable tone, and think more of the public welfare than of private advantage. Embrace such opportunities as present themselves consistently with other duties of helping by direct gift or effort, the cause of righteousness and truth. Put on the whole armor of God—and stand."

XIII.

HOW SHALL WE FACE OUR DIFFICULTIES?

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

—EPH. 6:13.

BE ALERT.

Wherefore: Verse twelve of this chapter pictures the evil day which surrounds us and the evil spirits which have a real, active existence. Temptations are in the very air we breathe. Danger is incessant. To determine to follow Christ, to yield our life to Him, to confess our sins, to receive the rite of Baptism, to unite with His church and to settle down to enjoy the privileges of fellowship with Him, will not give sufficient protection. We are to "grow in grace" daily. The Boy Scout uniform is in itself no proof of worth. Mastered tests, a daily good turn, and constant attitudes towards life determine the degree to which ideals have been appropriated, and the extent to which the insignia has meaning. The faith which leads us to the Light of life is of supreme importance as it keeps us in the Light we have found. The faith of Israel's leaders led the children to the promised land, but the conquest of the country depended upon the faith of Israel's populace. Many bitter battles were fought against enemies without and within before peace and security were their heritage. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you (Jas. 4:7)." Christians face a promised land. They have their battles. To issue from them victoriously, proper equipment for the conflict must be appropriated or defeat will be certain. In view of opponents and our incapacity, take the whole armor of God.

APPROPRIATE IN ACT.

Take unto you: God has made; we have only to take and keep what we take, using these implements until the warfare is over

and we are called to the peace of our fathers. Our armor is received without money and without price. It comes as a gift from its maker and with a guarantee to accomplish its intended purpose. God has never failed. His armor will never fail. God's ultimate purpose will be achieved through His chosen vassals. Our purpose to serve Him acceptably will also be achieved if we follow Him all the way to glory. Our equipment is not to be put in mothballs; it is not a museum piece or uniform confined to dress parade and special occasions. Some Christians only wear their armor on Sundays, at conferences, during the Lenten Season, or periods of evangelistic effort. In days of old, the knights wore their armor at banquet halls as in battle. The armor might be polished on glad days, but it bore the stains of weary marches and the marks of battle. Christ wants us to take armor and be willing to die for it. The real objectives of the Christian life are not realized by self-seeking but through doing the will of God.

The gods of mythology were supposed to make the armor for their heroes and challenge them to use it worthily. The Lord God of Gods presents believers with the armor for their battle with temptations. He spreads it on the ground at their feet, explains the importance of each part, and says, "Here it is. What are you going to do with it? Take it all. Every piece is tested and important. None can be neglected. All are free. Do not give it to someone else, for provision has been made for them also. This is yours. Appropriate it." How few have taken what God offers. Perhaps few realize the value of what God presents. The Scriptures reveal the exceeding great and precious worth of God's gifts. Search the Scriptures as you scan advertisements for bargains, and then quickly take all that God's Word offers you. Our God is a great God. His heart is no less loving than it was on the day He gave His only begotten Son to die for a sin-laden world. Christ's compassion reveals the heart of His Father. Let us take and drink of the water of life deeply, satisfyingly, and freely.

GOD CAN GIVE US VICTORY.

The whole armour of God: Great danger requires the best equipment. Toy swords may frighten some away, but not the

emissaries of the devil and his hosts who are our real enemies. The spiritual combat with spiritual powers in high places necessitates spiritual tools. "Whole" is an important word in this verse. Only the complete armor is effective. Achilles died because his loving mother forgot to dip the heel by which she held him in the waters which made him invulnerable to attack. Professing Christians slip into sin and hell because they think they have sufficient armor when they carry a sword or shield. They reason—others are not wearing the whole armor; surely God does not require everything? Such thinking is vain. The same Jesus who would not alter one jot or one tittle from the Old Testament law commands, "Take it all." The shield is useless without the sword; the sword is ineffective without the helmet; shoes without any other mode of defense render the wearer open to attack. Put on the whole armor of God.

It is significant that most of the Christian armor is for defense, not offense. The girdle, the breastplate, the sandals, the shield and the helmet are for face-to-face fighting. The enemy is to be in front. In fighting sin, no retreat is considered. For offense and defense we are given the sword and the prayer of a righteous heart. The same God who supplies the needs of angels, the same Father who guarded His Son from the tempter, ministers to us. It is not for us to offer suggestions as to ways to improve upon the order, position or use to which any piece of armor is to be put. Many tell God how to fight. Who has not heard prayers which virtually tell God what to do? Ours is not to reason why, but to do and dare. Put on the whole armor. David laid aside an armor unfit, unsuited to his type of fighting and faced Goliath with a sling shot. He knew a stone from that sling could lodge in a vulnerable spot. David chose familiar weapons, but trusted God to guide his arm in the power of the swing and the moment and direction of release. We are not to be so independent. We face not flesh and blood but principalities and unseen powers. One slip may spell our doom. One unguarded moment is sufficient for a watchful opponent to use and cause our fall. A thrust to a vital spot takes but a moment. Are you prepared in heart, mind and body to face temptations; can you—have you—resisted the evil one; can you face Jesus without the qualms of

a troubled conscience, and does thought of death leave you free from fears, uncertainty or distress?

Our armor is "of God" because He is the creator of it. He has His seal and mark upon it. God's mark is of supreme excellence. Trade marks have great value. God's mark has greater significance. This armor supplied by God surpasses man's efforts to duplicate it. The armor of God can be used only when we are doing the will of God. It has no purpose when we are doing the will of Satan, or working with unbelievers. But when we oppose Satan bent upon our destruction, the armor justifies itself. Satan comes as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Jesus came to save us from this danger. We need the armor of God because our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost and God wishes to dwell in our hearts.

The only way to obtain the armor is as a gift from God. We cannot borrow it as some borrow passes from their neighbors. We do not need to borrow when God places no limit upon His offerings. "Whosoever will, let him take . . . freely (Rev. 22:17)." He gives us the same equipment Jesus used so effectively. Having been tested by the Divine Son of God, we can use it without hesitancy. We can trust our life as serenely to this armor of God as an aviator to a parachute whose packing has been properly certified. He hurls himself from an airplane high in the heavens, knowing that the parachute he carries has been tested and guaranteed. When it opens, it will not rip under the sudden strain and drop him to his death. "Commit thy way unto the Lord and he will bring it to pass." The Lord's warfare is to be carried on with the Lord's weapons. Italy did not fight Ethiopia with bows and arrows. She used machine guns and the most modern of weapons. The issue must be sure. No known chance could be left unguarded and unsecured. God has provided in a divine way for all the emergencies which will befall a Christian in his struggle for perfection. It is said that Cromwell never failed to wear an armor of chain-mail under his regular armor, lest at an unguarded moment some unknown or hidden enemy might attack and severely wound him. The Christian cannot afford to be unguarded while fighting wrong. The hosts of evil are led by the master-craftsmen of evil spirits.

THE USE OF DEFENSIVE ARMOR.

That ye may be able to withstand: The soldier, unlike the farmer, has an antagonist and not a competitor. The soldier experiences exposure, constant exertion, indifference to suffering and discipline. He is trained to alertness and hardened to danger. Ease has little place in a soldier's life. Submission is not to be tolerated. Shall the soldier of the Cross do less? Disciples are to withstand the devil. "Your adversary the devil whom resist, steadfast in the faith (I Pet. 5:8, 9)." There can be no "at ease," relaxation, retreat, surrender, or truce. It is folly to be underarmed, unprepared, or to underestimate the power of an antagonist. It is suicidal to feel oversecure. Because Jesus is able, we through Him will be able. To withstand, implies to hold the fort. It pictures a proud, able defense, victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil. Sin is to be conquered. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? . . . Thanks be to God which gives us the victory . . ."

WE ARE TO BE SLEEPLESSLY WATCHFUL.

In the evil day: Storms are ahead. Light and darkness are in conflict. Hours of temptation beset on every hand. Moral peril surrounds constantly. Will the crisis find us ready, or shall we be weighed in the balance and found wanting? All face this test. The church faces it—a time of temptation, terror, persecution, affliction and threatening death. We dare not lay aside our armor.

This day of evil will bring confusion and doubt as to right and wrong, because the world and its spirit have entered the church. Members of the church will live in the world and be of the world. Those who profess to be Christians will, like Lot, do what everyone else is doing. This will be an evil day because it leads to destruction. It was an evil day for the Temple area when Jesus found the moneychangers there. Profaning the Lord's day will also lead to inevitable doom and ruin.

James Learmont sees in this evil day unregulated freedom when discipline and restraint are resented; a day when excitement is the supreme objective, when self-indulgence is con-

stantly sought, when society lives from one dissipation to another in a continuous round of merrymaking and worldly pleasure; a day when the purpose of life is to strive for worldly possessions and mature objects—wealth, property, and worldly success displacing the things of God and of the spirit; a day when the individual no longer counts but government and society as a whole moves in mass formation. How different is this picture from that given by Christ who followed the one method. Jesus did not heal in mass. He fed multitudes, but spoke to individuals as Nichodemus and the woman at the well. A soul is precious in the kingdom of God. The day of evil has come when sin has blinded men to the need for sympathy, co-operation, and fellowship. "The hope of society lies in individuality not conformity," says Emerson. The evil day will be a day when spiritual values are questioned and doubts arise concerning Divine creation, the inspiration of the Scriptures, the Divinity of Christ, miracles and the essentials of the Christian faith. "A little learning is a dangerous thing." The evil day is a day of lowered ideals, of confusion of tongues, of haze concerning right and wrong and a day when human life is held cheap. The evil day is a time of spiritual declension, despondency, backsliding, false doctrine, rebuke, and persecution.

WE ARE TO LEAVE NO STONE UNTURNED

And having done all: How many short words are found in Scripture! "All" has but three letters, but how important and inclusive is the territory covered by them. We are to do all that Christ asks of us. We are to do everything that we know how to do, we are to live up to the light which we have. Having done all refers not only to our work but that act of our faith which trusts God for everything and feels itself unable to progress apart from Him. An hour of minor triumphs is an hour of danger. How often victory is snatched away by defeat. Death alone concludes our earthly mission. There is no retirement in the army of the Lord. A soldier may receive a pension and be honorably discharged, but a soldier of the Lord carries on until death takes him. What glory to die in the harness for Jesus, to die in active ministry! A young woman recently perished in a bitter storm on Mount Wash-

ington when within call of the shelter which had been provided for just such an emergency. She perished in sight of the goal. Ships are wrecked within a ship's length of a light-house or lifesaving station. How many are near to the kingdom of heaven and yet so far. A train can be as surely missed by a minute as by an hour. Failure is not as much a matter of distance or time as of fact.

BE FIXED IN POSTURE.

To stand: We are to maintain our position at all costs—to hold on, to hold out and stand by our colors to the bitter end. "We will not only be triumphant in the midst of conflict, we will be safe in the calm that succeeds it." Armed with Christ, we can be "unshaken in loyalty and ready to the last." We may remain unmoved in position, ready for any attack of the enemy. Satan seeks to dislodge the church from her position and cause her to retreat from the contention of ages and yield the ground of her authority. The church dare not fall back or retreat. God is on her side. God has triumphed over the wrecks of time. He will continue to support the creature of His wisdom. Our part is to stand for all that Christ stood for, and all that God has commanded. "The earnestness for the salvation of men, a passion for righteousness, a hatred of evil, a zeal for personal holiness are opposed to love of money, the lusts of the flesh, strong drink and grievous sins."

The world occupies the bleachers. God has given us the orders for the day—stand against the wiles of the devil, remain steadfast and standing. This may be a strenuous task, but not a hopeless one. Victory is through Christ. In Him, we can stand unmoved as the rock of Gibraltar. We can stand unflinching and unafraid. The end of the battle will find us unscathed, if we put on the whole armor of God. Standing is a military term which is opposed to all falling, unsteadiness, retreat, yielding, or fleeing. We are to hold the field against all comers, since the army in possession of the field is accorded the victory. The Christian is to stand by his guns. He should remember that, in spite of many setbacks, final victory will be his through Christ.

Standing involves three duties: 1. Watching against all enemies; 2. working intensively at the tasks of the kingdom, and 3. praying without ceasing. "When you faint, you fall back upon nothing," says John Hutton. "When you pray, you fall back on God."

XIV.

THE PROTECTION OF OUR BODIES

“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.”—EPH. 6:14.

STAND FAST.

Stand therefore: Many enemies harass the Christian. Christ furnishes weapons for this warfare. Those who believe in Jesus and dedicate their lives to Him are to live victorious lives. Victory is the keynote of Christianity. The church of God triumphs over the wrecks of time. So Paul issues this challenge: Stand, face your foe, remember Jesus Christ. Keep your reward before you. Lift your eyes to heaven and fight. Never give up the battle. Consciously and continually stand your ground. Determine definitely to stand for everything Jesus has asked you to do, say, and be.

While no definite sins are suggested, Paul points to the defenses which through Christ gives power over all sin. A preventative program of practical preparedness is outlined to insure peace. The robber generally falls upon an unwary traveler; an armed nation swoops upon a helpless country; Satan seeks the idle, indifferent Christian; disease takes possession of a careless body; the air we breathe is filled with all manner of microbes and bacteria seeking a weak spot in which to lodge and strike the whole body with eventual death. Health is the best possible preparation—proper breathing, adequate sleep, well balanced diets, pure air, cleanliness, wholesome and moderate exercise, and godliness. A healthy body eliminates disease as fast as it enters. An ounce of spiritual preventative is worth a pound of cure. A clean mind, a pure heart, a consecrated will, a body given to the Lord's service, will prevent conflicts in unseparated lives and undedicated souls. Stand always for God and thus avoid embarrassing situations. It is usually far harder to simply stand for all that

God stands for than to fight aggressively. It is frequently undramatic to always be on the right side and stand by convictions. Yet it is the Christian's calling, privilege and duty to calmly face the struggles, sufferings, duties, cares and sorrows of life, and to patiently, quietly, uncomplainingly endure to the end. Our Savior will give us His spirit and power to stand. Strength comes from without, before it can be effective from within.

Those who have been digging in the ruins of Pompeii uncovered the rusty armor of a lone sentry standing in his stone sentry box as if on duty. Other skeletons were found in cellars to which inhabitants had fled for vain safety, or were unearthed in the streets as though running from the deadly rain of ashes and fire. But this lone sentry stood at his post until death claimed him. Christians are commanded to stand at their task moment by moment, day after day, year after year, doing what the Holy Word of God indicates to be the right thing to do. Great will be their reward in heaven.

THE GIRDLE.

Having your loins girt about with truth: This calm, strong, steady standing at our post is partly made possible by the girdle of truth we are asked to wear. Soldiers daily stood about Paul; he saw them wearing their armor, putting it on and taking it off. The first piece usually placed upon the body was the girdle. This had various forms and was made from a range of metals. It was fashioned like a vest covering front and back. Its foundation might be heavy, coarse linen, or leather covered with copper, or scales of iron. Its purpose was to be a base for other pieces to be added later, to give strength to the whole body, and to give the wearer freedom of movement and a sense of confidence and fitness. A soldier thus clad was ready in body and mind to face the foe. His mind was clear, decided and confident. "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ (I Pet. 1:13)."

A soldier's girdle kept the rest of his equipment from flapping about and getting in the way of the thrust or guard, which might mean death or life, defeat or victory. No soldier

could fight with clanging weapons about his knees and limbs. The military girdle, though frequently ornamented with gems and beautifully engraved, was far more than an ornament. A Christian is to have no loose ways of thinking, living or serving. When we get right with God we tighten up and cause our reasoning, thinking, giving and dreaming to be unhampered by clanging discords, and those characteristics which are always getting in our way and hindering us from doing our best. Sin always gets in our way; wrongdoing hinders, discourages and limits our efforts to do what is just and right, even causing our best actions to receive evil interpretations.

After Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal at Carmel, "he girded up his loins and ran before." God says to Job, "Gird up now thy loins like a man and answer me." In one of his letters, Paul gives this advice, "Gird up the loins of your mind, watch, and be sober." Luke quotes the Master as saying, "And let your loins be girded about and your light burning." Isaiah defines this girdle—"and righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins." Peter enlarges somewhat: "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ (I Pet. 1:13)." We need protection against the tempter. We are not like turtles with an armor growing over us into which we can retreat. We must take up and retain what has been provided for us; we have the power of choice and deliberately select for ourselves and appropriate, putting on and using the girdle not as an ornament, but as a weapon.

This girding of our loins might be variously defined. We might say, we take up definite convictions in accordance with the revealed Word of the Lord which we accept as a gospel capable of saving us; we select from this Word those promises and that truth for daily needs which the Spirit reveals to us as the guiding message of the day. The spirit of truth which Christ left as our inheritance through faith in Him opens the way to an understanding of the message we receive for the temptations or the needs of the moment. A Christian lady described her girdle by saying that because of Jesus her "wont's" were stronger than her "want to's." The Christian is braced for fighting.

This girdle which binds up and strengthens us is to be truth in look, in spirit, conduct and action; truth in thought, determinations, desires; truth in our reasonings, judgments, opinions and will to do; truth gauged by the standards of Him who was the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. This girdle of strength is absolute frankness, unvarying honesty and undiluted sincerity. It is to be recognized and known by right relations within us, by right communications with our God and Savior, Jesus Christ; and by right dealings with our fellow-men. Negatively there is to be an absence of deceit, excuse, insincerity and disguise. We are to fight falsehood, misrepresentation and lies in all forms. A lie is an abomination to the Lord, whether it be enacted in religious observances, politics, business, or the social order. The Spirit of Christ must saturate society in all its activities. This Spirit begins with plain honesty and truth. Pray to be true in dealing, thinking and speaking.

*"I would be true, for there are those who trust me;
I would be pure, for there are those who care;
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer;
I would be brave, for there is much to dare."*

Has this girdle of truth become loose? Have we fastened it securely about us, or are we wearing it carelessly? The equipment of the soldier must be worn with exactness and precision if he is to pass inspection. Can we, as Christians, pass Christ's inspection? "Reason, tradition, speculation, conviction, dead orthodoxy," says Hodge, "are the girdle of spider-webs. They give way at the first onset." Doubt, unbelief and speculation are disastrous hopes. They are not even idle dreams. The soul that is stayed on God has strength to overcome. If Christ is in us why fear what man can do unto us. "The Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true . . . his Son Jesus Christ (I John 5:20)." We are quickened together with Christ, we are builded together as an habitation with God by the Spirit of God, we are called of God, and as children of God are saved for all eternity, if we have "the truth of God, used defensively, for personal nourishment and education." "I

will not pretend to an interest I do not feel," as Hobart puts it, "I will not pay compliments that are hollow; I will not make statements about my religious life that are extravagant, I will not pretend an affection that is not in my heart."

CLOTHING OURSELVES.

And having on: The righteousness of God must be put on. He gives us the weapons, he assures us of their correctness, but we must put them on and use them. No one else can fight our battles for us. Our Christian experience is gained through hard knocks. The crown of righteousness which fadeth not away is given to those who overcome, and endure to the end of the struggle. If we would overcome let us put on and keep on, lest the tempter find us off our guard, and try the lusts of the world and the flesh to our destruction.

PROTECTING THE VITAL SPOTS.

The breastplate of righteousness: The breastplate was put on to defend the heart, lungs and vital organs against attack. It was a coat of mail, usually covering back and front and made of strange overlapping pieces of brass, or steel fastened to a foundation of leather or strongly woven cloth. Satan aims his shafts at the vital points of our profession. He seeks to kill our loving desire to serve God. He would severely wound us and make us unable to fight the good fight of faith. We need protection at the very heart of our spiritual life, the spring of our thinking and the seat of our affection for the things which are above. We are to bind righteousness upon us. The breastplate is the most conspicuous part of our armor. Its flash is quickly seen. The righteousness of the Christian is easily and surely observed by the world. Are we better than those who make no profession? Do we forgive where others would cherish a grudge? Can we distinguish between the sinner and his sin? In the name of Christ and for His sake, can we turn the other cheek and go the second mile? Can we take up our cross daily, and follow Him? The world is watching. If we leave off the breastplate of righteousness we expose ourselves to all the darts of the Evil One. Let us therefore put on "the righteousness which is of God by faith." Of God it is written, "He put on

righteousness as a breastplate (Isa. 59:17).” “Let us who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love (I Thess. 5:8).” This does not contradict the command to put on righteousness as a breastplate. We need faith to recognize the righteousness of Christ and find righteousness for ourselves. Faith expresses itself in love.

The question might be raised, however, whether Paul means us to put on (1) the righteousness of Christ as a garment to cover our sin or (2) that personal righteousness which comes from fellowship with God, and right relations with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, or (3) whether he means putting on both the righteousness of God without which we could have no righteousness and our own rightness which results from this appropriation. Shall we put on our imputed and imparted righteousness? Of this we are sure, the defense of the believer is uprightness and moral integrity. A clean conscience is the best possible preparation for a difficult task. There is no higher conception of duty than God’s. Daniel proved this clearly (Chap. 1:6). Hodge raises the question—“Can our righteousness protect us against the accusations of conscience, the whisper of despondency, the power of temptation, the severity of the law, or the assaults of Satan?” Paul desired not his own righteousness but the righteousness which is of God by faith (Phil. 3:8, 9). The righteousness of Christ satisfies all demands. “Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins (Isa. 11:5).” We become righteous as we put on the righteousness of Christ. We become right as Christ enters our mind and as we abide in Him and He in us. This fact is brought out with clearness in Paul’s life. Before His conversion, he speaks of himself as “touching the righteousness which is of the law blameless.” After Jesus appeared to Paul and he became a disciple he writes, “Not having a righteousness of my own but that of Christ.” Christ, with no flaw, sin or point of entry for temptation, covers him and gives him of Himself. These same characteristics of Christ’s imputed righteousness are the heritage of every believer through faith. Satan has no place in a heart protected by Christ. A soldier once wrapped himself in his country’s flag and defied his enemies to harm him. Our protection is Jesus in the heart. Henry Clay, writing to a friend, penned these immortal words, “I

would rather be right than be President." What compensation can there be for being wrong. "A man who is conscious of being wrong is usually a coward," says Dr. Erdman; "a man who knows that he is right can withstand a multitude and enters the conflict without fear." Let us gird ourselves with moral integrity and the righteousness of Christ.

"I will not be unjust in my speech about others," says Hobart, "in business I will not seek to get gain by any except straight business methods; I will not seek or accept credit for what I did not do; I will not try and be pushed forward beyond what I deserve; in my estimates of others I will not form unkind opinions without having all the facts; I will not hear a rumor and at once accept it without giving the man a chance to be heard in his own defense; I will not prejudice any man; it shall be the habit of my life to be just in dealing, in spirit, in thought and in affection." Luther wrote to Melancthon, "Be not troubled in spirit, but sing the Lord's song in the night—let us only be concerned about the Word." Jowett sees nothing but victory for the "man who takes some great truth of revelation, some mighty word of life, some broad and bracing promise of grace, and belts it about his soul, and wears it in active service."

Wear the breastplate of righteousness and be girt with the girdle of truth.

XV.

GOSPEL SHOES

"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."
—EPH. 6:15.

PREPAREDNESS.

And your feet: In the old Roman warfare, which was largely hand-to-hand, proper care of the feet was of major importance. The foothold must be sure and settled at all times if the warrior was to maintain his ground and be ready for attack from any quarter. Proper care of the feet was therefore most important in securing steadiness and alertness in combat. Besides, the soldier was to maintain instant readiness for orders and forced marches. The line of march was not along a modern smooth, well graded, paved highway. Progress might be over a path filled with sharp stones, all manner of obstructions, thorns, briars, hidden poisonous insects and serpents. A soldier fit for battle was needed, not a tired, foot weary, sore-footed combatant nursing aching, bruised feet. Firmness was obtained from the girdle, vital organs were guarded by a breastplate, but the feet must have protection from weather, road conditions and dangers of the highway. If Christians are to walk along the path which has been set before us, their feet must be properly shod whether their duty is to stand and wait, or to be in active conflict with hosts of evil.

READY FOR ANY EMERGENCY.

Shod: Military sandals gave protection and solid foothold. A soldier's sandal was sturdy and at times covered with metal. The sole was carefully fitted and bound with thongs about the ankle. A gladiator entering the arena to fight for his life usually had sharp spikes driven into his soles to prevent that slipping which might give quick advantage to his assailant and also enable him to spring quickly to one side to escape a

deadly thrust. The believer needs sure footing in his battle with Satan. We must be prepared to preach the Gospel and give our testimony for Him. With no loss of time our witness must be ready. No man knoweth the day nor the hour when an opportunity may come to tell others of his faith in God, his saving knowledge of Christ, and his dependence upon the Holy Spirit for strength and power. "Gird thyself and bind on thy sandals—and follow me (Acts 12:8)." Our safety in moments of temptation lies in this preparation and Divinely supplied equipment. Alpine guides wear heavy boots and spiked soles when mounting dangerous glaciers. A party was climbing the famous Piz Morteratsch roped together as is the custom in these dangerous climbs. The ascent had been successful; the descent was begun. A dangerous piece of ice covered with loose snow was encountered. The guide cautioned each to follow exactly in his footsteps or a dangerous slide might result and carry them to certain death over the edge of a precipice below. Hardly had the words escaped his lips when the slide started and all began slipping with increasing speed towards the cliff which meant certain death on the rocks far below. After sliding for some distance, the guide was able to dig his spikes into the ice and bring all to a standing position on the very verge of the cliff. The spikes had saved all from a horrible and certain death.

None of us are properly prepared for the journey of life, our climb to the heavenly heights and the goal which has been set before us until we have our feet properly shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. As the guide chose for himself and companion suitable equipment, so the Son of God has chosen for us the best materials and the same equipment used by himself. No matter how rough our path, Gospel shoes are equal to the strain. The Gospel does not become worn and useless. Wear the shoes provided by Jesus Christ our Lord, and you will be able to go confidently through thick and thin, through storm and smooth sailing, feeling sure of yourself through Christ.

Preceding the coming of Christ, worshipers stood unshod before their God for the ground upon which they stood was holy. Jehovah must be approached with reverence and humility. The Lord speaks to Moses (Ex. 3:5), "Put off thy

shoes from off thy feet, for the place where thou standest is holy ground." God speaks to Joshua, (Josh. 5:15), "Loose thy shoe from off thy foot, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." David goes up Mount Olivet barefoot and with head covered. But we dare not stand before Satan unshod and unprepared. We can worship God with abandon, fearing no foe, and concentrating upon forgiveness and blessing. Satan seeks our soul. "My soul, be on thy guard." Ten thousand foes assail. In Paul's day, a soldier had to contend not only with forces of nature in the way of stones, thorns, rough and dangerous paths, but also snares deliberately set by the enemy. Gall-traps of sharp sticks were set in the probable line of advance to inflict serious injury upon the feet of passing soldiers and render them unfit for the line of march. Shoes with hob-nails and greaves were worn as a protection lest the march be impeded. The Christian fights a crafty foe. Snares are set for his feet. No moment can be left unguarded. As a soldier of Jesus, are you ready and fit, or are you crippled and unprepared for advance, a forced march, or sentinel duty?

STEADFASTNESS IN PERSONAL WELFARE

With the preparation: Readiness to stand and do all that God assigns is most necessary. Even standing requires preparation. David testifies (Ps. 57:7), "My heart is fixed, my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise," and adds, (Ps. 10:17), "Lord, Thou hast heard the desires of the humble—Thou wilt prepare their heart." For what are we to be prepared? Active service is required. "Go ye into all the world." God prepared the children of Israel for their forty years of wandering, by having them properly shod. "Their shoes waxed not old, neither did their feet swell." This is our God. He will not leave us nor forsake us. Unknown dangers lie in the path of life. In anguish, David cries, "The proud have hid a snare for me, and have spread a net by the roadside." Our most careful planning will not remove uncertainties, for "My ways are not your ways, neither are your ways, my ways, saith the Lord." We need to be prepared to stand the grind and routine of life. Its monotony deadens. Only the heart which is stayed on God established in His laws can wait patiently for the day of His calling. The suicide is not ready for life, for death, or eternity.

The believer faces dangerous operations and an unknown tomorrow with calmness and serenity, determined by the grace of God—"if the Lord will"—to make the best of it, doing what seems best in the light of God's word.

The peace of God is a reward. A Christian can face a difficult path with confidence, hope and joy. The will of God unfolds itself. The gospel of peace has brought peace, resolve, and a stout heart for the task assigned. "Be always in marching order, swift to answer the occasion, to follow the course in response to the leading of conscience, or the dictates of your best thought." Jowett feels we ought to be always ready to proclaim the Gospel message, whether we are called upon or not. We should be ready in case we are called to serve on a committee, to hold office, or help in some Christian service. The doctor keeps his kit and conveyance in instant readiness for an unknown emergency. The hospital is equipped for possible patients and probable epidemics. A Christian must search the Word of God, memorize its precious promises, be familiar with its passages, be versed in the method of personal work in order to do the will of God when a door opens. It is too late to learn to swim when the boat is sinking. Paul was constantly repeating the prayer, "I am now ready to be offered"; "As much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome." "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things (Rom. 10:15)." The bearer of good tidings must hasten to bring to those anxiously watching upon the battlements news of the battle and assurance of the safety of their loved ones. Such a messenger must be prepared for his task, or great will be the needless suffering of watchers while he sits nursing tender feet. The Believer has a gospel of goodness for the world. Sin can be forgiven; the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin. Those sitting outside the pale of the gospel are perishing for lack of such news. Are you, with Paul, "ready for every good work," ready to do what is necessary when the opportunity is offered? The motto of the Boy Scouts is "Be prepared." The crest of the Baptist Missionary Society is a picture of an ox standing between a plough and an altar. Below are the words, "Ready for either." Are we ready for either? Can we wait with patience the race that is

set before us? Are we ready to meet our God and do the will of Him who has brought us into the world?

A HOLY PEACE.

Of the gospel of peace: This peace is in contrast with conflict in the world. Peace is prepared as shoes are prepared. Good shoes have to be carefully cobbled. The peace of God is a work in our hearts, minds and souls. "My peace I give unto you (John 14:27)." Christ came "to guide our feet into the way of peace (Luke 1:79)." "And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:7)." "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee (Isa. 26:3)." "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God (Rom. 5:1)." When we feel we have peace with God we can stand anything, we can face all enemies, we can do all things through Christ who strengthenest us. Possession of the Gospel in our hearts gives us peace with God, peace in our heart of hearts, and peace with our brethren. To do the will of God, this is peace. From a prison cell Samuel Rutherford writes, "Whosoever can take up his cross handsomely will find it such a burden as sails are to a ship, and wings to a bird. My prison is a palace to me and Christ's banquetting-hall."

Various gospels are mentioned in Holy Scriptures—the everlasting gospel, the gospel of the kingdom, the gospel of God, the gospel of the grace of God, the gospel of the glory of Christ. The Gospel is always dependable and sure, whether used for our security or defense. The Word of God standeth sure and we stand sure because the Word is hidden in our heart. When this Word of God is in our hearts we can say,

*Anywhere with Jesus I can safely go,
Anywhere He leads me, in this world below,
Anywhere without Him dearest joys would fade;
Anywhere with Jesus I am not afraid.
Anywhere, anywhere, fear I cannot know;
Anywhere with Jesus I can safely go.*

This is good news which cheers us on our way and enables us to smile even through our tears. The presence of God in

our hearts is peace. We are certain of His favor. If God be for us, we can face all enemies and wait patiently for the end. God is at peace with us. The enmity sin has caused has been removed by His forgiveness. Joy, joy, joy! The best preparation for danger, hardship and suffering is to rest at peace with God, with no unpardoned sin separating, no secret indulgence of the heart continued. We have been cleansed from all stain by the precious blood of Jesus. Such friendship and confidence with God is needed more than anything else. The gospel of peace also brings us the peace of God. "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God (Rom. 5:1, 2)." "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:7)." The gospel of peace brings the peace of reconciliation with our fellows. In other words, the Christian is prepared for any and all emergencies of life. We are not caught with unfilled lamps as were the foolish virgins, nor are we found asleep in the hour of need as were the disciples. The gospel of peace is proper and adequate covering for our feet; it will give us stability of faith and proficiency in Christian living, despite our consciousness of having fallen short of the glory of God, and having left much undone. Peace of mind will come through faith in Him and knowledge that enmity with God is past, sins are forgiven, God is ours and we are his.

We fight to keep our possession and also to withstand and vanquish the adversary lest others fall before him. We claim the gospel of peace, then fight the liquor traffic, graft, selfishness, lawless passion, and oppression which are disturbers of peace. "The peace of God means love," says Brown, "Divine love, filling all hearts with tenderness, all eyes with meekness, all hands with ministry, all lips with truth, all homes, all tribes, all nations, with peace." "If you want victory, secure peace in your heart, get the love of God there and keep it there." Spiritual preparedness necessitates having feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.

XVI.

THE WORK OF FAITH

"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

—EPH. 6:16.

MEETING SHIFTING ATTACKS.

Above all: The Christian has been advised to prepare himself for spiritual warfare by equipping himself with a girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, and the sandals of the preparation of the gospel of peace. Each weapon is indispensable when fighting the invisible forces of the evil one. In addition to these, an important weapon is to be mentioned which must be worn at all times and under all occasions. Without this added implement of defense, other weapons may be rendered useless in defending oneself against a fatal thrust. Without this important grace of faith it is impossible to please God even though possessing truth, righteousness, and the gospel of peace. Faith acts as a sure protection against many of the wiles of the devil when other weapons have proven ineffective. Satan's method of attack is varied. It is impossible to tell from what quarter temptation will next appear. In order to be protected at all times, it is necessary to take the shield of faith, an unwavering belief in the sufficiency of God and His care over those who have committed themselves without reserve to His mercy and guidance.

PROTECTING OUR SOUL.

Taking the shield: The Roman soldier had two forms of shields, a small one used in close hand-to-hand combat, and another, large and doorlike, approximately four by two and a half feet in size—large enough to completely protect the body of its carrier against the arrows, darts and missiles of the enemy. In advancing into battle these shields could be raised above the head to afford complete shelter from above,

or be placed side by side to present a solid wall to shield the advancing host. These shields were heavy. Frequently a solid piece of wood was a base upon which various metals had been laid to make a noninflammable, hard surface to resist fire, the blows of sharp swords, or the piercing shocks of javelins, spears or arrows. The word used here refers to the large, doorlike shield. God offers complete protection to His soldiers. No part of their body, mind, or soul needs to be exposed. The shield is sufficient for any emergency, but it must be used to be effective. The shield carried in the left hand was shifted in accordance with the direction of danger, and left the right arm free to use the sword to advantage in offensive combat.

The shield was for defense, and both God and Christ are spoken of as shields for believers. "Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward (Gen. 15:1)." "The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield (II Sam. 22:3)." "Behold, O God, our shield"—"For the Lord God is a sun and shield (Ps. 84:9, 11)." We can hold up our God against any doubt, fear, temptation, distress, persecution or force that stands between us and them. Our belief in Jehovah and His Son Jesus Christ, Their spoken, written and communicated word, makes us well nigh invulnerable. Our only hope and protection lies in trusting the power of God. This belief has been demonstrated of worth in the lives of God's people throughout the ages. Hebrews (Chap. 11) partially lists the rewards of those who came to God believing that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. In the days of chivalry, knights wore their escutcheons upon their shields to identify them, to inspire them to the limit of their ability, and to strike consternation to their foes. The Christian carries the mark of the high calling in Christ Jesus into his conflict with sin. The cross was indelibly written on Paul's mind. God places His mark upon the heart of every Christian. We go forth to war as sons of God, with the invincible Captain of our salvation going before to strike terror into the ranks of our enemies.

FAITH BRINGS PROTECTION.

Of faith: Reliance upon God bears good fruit. It pays to trust Him more and more. Faith is justified by her works. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt—be healed—rise up and walk—have sufficiency for the morrow—have hope of eternal reward—be ready when the Son of man comes—be heir to all the promises of God. “No good thing will he withhold from them” that diligently seek Him. Christ the Son of God, and Jesus our Savior, is to be the object of our faith. “He that believeth upon him shall be saved.” “There is life for a look at the crucified one.” The Cross upon which He was lifted becomes as efficacious as the brazen serpent raised for the despairing eyes of the children of Israel in the wilderness to see and receive healing and life for their faith. By faith, we are reconciled to God; by faith we are justified by God; by faith, we cultivate the acquaintance of Christ and enter into inner fellowship with Him; by faith, we desire to please Him and purpose to place God first in our life and live for Him in all things. Faith, the substance of things hoped for and the substance of things not seen, becomes the sustaining power of our lives to keep us from all conflicts. When the devil, as a roaring lion, goes about seeking whom he can devour, our faith comes to our rescue and enables us to “resist stedfast in the faith (I Pet. 5:9).” As food frees us from faintness, so faith delivers us from the despair, remorse and injury from sin.

As the shield when shifted adds to the protection of sandals, breastplate, or helmet in meeting an attack from an enemy, so the Christian meets temptation from any quarter by faith in God. “Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.” Faith sends a wireless message to the omnipotent God to come and help us. An S.O.S. always finds God tuned in to receive our call. Faith turns our eyes outward, heavenward, and Godward. Faith, like a shield, bears the brunt of the blows. Fiery darts fall helpless and extinguish themselves at the feet of the shieldbearer. Arrows spend their force and become harmless as they strike the shield. The sword may be broken or diverted from the body of the intended victim by the shield. Satan’s weapons are taken from us by our faith in God. Spar-

tan mothers said farewell to their sons marching to battle with this thrilling parting word: "With your shield or upon it." What faith have you? Has your faith removed mountains, or is it like a grain of mustard seed? Have you used what faith you have? Faith is like a muscle which grows with use, or atrophies with disuse. God intended faith to guard us like the doorlike shield of the Roman soldier.

A SURE PROMISE.

Wherewith we shall be able: This promise is not like many advertisements glowing with a promise unrealized by trial. God never fails to give satisfaction. Jesus did not overvalue the Father in heaven. When He said, "Ask and ye shall receive," He meant just *that*. God stands ready. Are we? He is able. We become able through grace which is imparted through Christ by the co-operation of the Holy Spirit. "Shall" can well be underscored and emphasized. There is no doubt about God's ability to save to the uttermost all who come to Him. There is no question but that He will do all He has promised. God has never yet failed to keep His vows and promises. Our faith is a constant shield in every sense of the word, but we must exercise it. The soldier does not leave his shield hanging upon the wall at home. He polishes it, shines it, practices with it, becomes used to its weight and encumbrance, so that when the critical moment comes, that shield may be a defense and not a handicap. Our faith is to save us; it can save us only by actual use. We practice in the everyday and seemingly unimportant details of our lives so that when the crisis arrives, when we stand in the shadow of death, our faith will justify the dependence we have placed upon it. A life preserver needs to be inspected; drills accustom the wearer to its feel, proper position, and bring calmness in the moment of danger.

Have faith in God, faith grounded upon the Word of God. Such faith will not be like a shield of cardboard, gilded to appear like brass or steel. Satan cannot pierce the defenses of a consecrated, believing heart. When doubts, deceits, or fears assail our minds, use the shield of faith; when the world appeals to the lusts of the flesh, use the shield of faith; when our veracity, righteousness, and peace is attacked, use the

shield of faith. With Jesus, quote Scripture. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today, and forever." Recall the saints and their victories; recall the church and its triumphs, remember the forward march of the Scriptures in the consciousness of the world and the march of time. Remember Jesus Christ—and march on. "My soul, be on thy guard."

CONFIDENCE IN GOD IS REWARDED.

To quench: The flaming arrows were quenched before they reached their destined object. The poisoned tip of the arrow was dangerous only if it pierced the shield and penetrated the body unprotected by the shield. Our souls can be reached by the devil only when we are caught off guard. But if we use what God tells us to use as a defense, the darts of Satan will fall harmlessly and we can praise our God for deliverance. Inflamed and burning passions, like fiery darts hurled at us for our undoing, are distress and destruction. Darts were hurled to inflict injury, to impede progress, to thin the ranks, to weaken morale, to spread confusion in battle, to render a foe helpless or vulnerable. A Christian's faith in God and His word foils Satan as the shield makes the flaming arrows harmless. Our faith protects every part of our body as the shield afforded security to the whole body; our faith strengthens and adds to the efficiency of our other Christian virtues as the shield when shifted covered the feet, head, side, or part of the body liable to injury. Many a helmet would have been pierced, many a vital organ reached, had it not been for the shield. Unswerving confidence in God is our protection. "Quench not the Spirit (I Thess. 5:19)."

SATAN'S WEAPONS.

All the fiery darts: Fiery darts of cane were tipped with flaming combustible material and released from a slack bow lest they be extinguished. These fiery darts were sent into the camp of the enemy to ignite any inflammable material and cause destruction of supplies, protection and equipment. At times a trist of tow was dipped in tar and set on fire; cane arrows with heads like distaffs were filled with inflammable materials to fire enemy defenses. Satan sends fiery darts

towards every heart trusting in God. Suggestions, impulses and insinuations are aimed at us. Paul does not here speak of those inward flaming passions which lead to destruction unless extinguished, but of those outward forces which Satan hurls against us. All fiery darts are to be extinguished—*all*, not some; *all*, not a few. There are to be no exceptions. God's defenses are complete. Nothing is lacking. No emergencies can arise for which He does not afford protection. God's defenses are foolproof. All doubts, fears, suspicions, profane thoughts; all evil suggestion, blasphemy, wrath, despair, revenge, and lust; all ambition, desire, pride, form of selfishness, and discontent; all temptations which Satan can possibly connive at or send in our direction, can be warded off before they reach or injure us.

We do not need to be wounded. Our injuries cannot be blamed upon our shield, but only upon our negligent selves. Do not blame God for lack of faith, or complain of suffering which could have been warded off by belief in God's promises to keep His followers secure. Many a soldier with complete and serviceable equipment has died in battle because he was not proficient in its use. It would be murder to send green troops into battle with the best of armament and the most experienced commanders. So soldiers are placed in training camps. The church, Sunday school, prayer-meeting, young people's societies, studyclasses, conferences, family devotions, and the quiet hour, are training camps where we learn how to use God's weapons to effectively quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. Faith protects and saves us. Faith gives that *esprit de corps* which carries an army forward unwaveringly. Faith is the spirit and essence of that by which we have victory in overcoming the world. Faith is the victory!

It is difficult to enumerate the darts which Satan uses against us. They may differ for various individuals. They are not always the same. Some commonly recognized are objections usually heard by personal workers in evangelistic meetings. For example: "I am good enough. I do nothing really wrong. I am as good as the majority, or those who go to church"; "When Christians and Bible students agree in Biblical interpretation I will believe the Bible, not until then." "There is plenty of time. Christ told the thief upon the cross

that he would be with Him in paradise. I am well and strong, I will eat, drink and be merry—tomorrow I will take Jesus as my personal Savior.” With Hezekiah, we are besieged with the soft voices of those who would tempt us to lower our standards and depart from the faith of our fathers, to keep abreast of the times and keep from being old-fashioned, to keep in step with the discoveries of science. All these fiery darts can be extinguished for our security and happiness. Every time a temptation is vanquished, we find peace. Had it not been for Christ and my faith in God, my grave might have been a drunkard’s grave; my child might have died in an electric chair; I might have been behind prison bars; I might have fallen, my body might have been burning from the diseases of sin, my children might have inherited unclean bodies, my soul might be vexed—but glory be to God, Victory has been mine. Can’t you see a soldier exult in battle as he sees arrow after arrow smoulder and die at his feet, harmless and extinguished? This is to be the song of deliverance of the believer through Christ. Faith shows us how to met “injuries, threats, beasts, unbelief and worldly powers, the poisoned arrows of the deceitful and the bitter words of unjust reproach, with faith’s quiet counter assertions. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ Jesus our Lord?”

OUR ENEMY.

Of the wicked one: It does not take much of an opening to permit the point of a poisoned dart to enter, wound, poison and produce death. We dare not relax vigilance by the turn of a head or a moment. Satan is the one who hurls. He is the Tempter—none other and no less. With him as an adversary God is needed to match His wits. Satan seeks our soul. He will be satisfied with nothing less. The soul that sinneth shall die unless the salvation offered by Jesus is made available to us. Our faith overcomes the world. “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith (I John 5:4).” Our faith can overcome the evil one. “We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not (I John 5:18).” Satan is the one who “sows tares in the field” to

make the crop poor and well nigh worthless (Matt. 13: 28, 29). "Cain was of that wicked one, and slew his brother (I John 3:12)." "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself and that wicked one toucheth him not (I John 5:18)." We have been warned. Pride, self-love, flattery, the craving for worldly and selfish use of wealth and power are of the devil; envy, jealousy, unwholesome rivalry, bitterness, fraud, extravagance cannot be overcome except by spiritual forces sent by God in answer to our faith. Evil passions and miseries are sent by Satan to weaken our faith in God and produce backsliding. Unbelief and doubt in the existence of God are flaming arrows aimed at our destruction. Above all, take up the shield of faith and exercise this implement of self-defense. Glory in God's provision and the victory of faith.

XVII.

THE WORD OF GOD

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" —EPH. 6:17.

ACCEPT FROM GOD.

And take: The Greek word for "take" differs from the word used in verses thirteen and sixteen. It here signifies accepting something from the hand of another which has been offered. This word occurs fifty-two times in the New Testament. We are to receive from the hand of God that which God has prepared for our defense, and which He presents to us without money and without price. So the Thessalonians "received the word" brought them by Paul (I Thess. 1:6). Having so taken the Word they are urged "Let us who are of the day be sober, putting on for an helmet, the hope of salvation (I Thess. 5:8)." Titus accepts "the exhortation" offered by the Corinthians (II Cor. 8:17). Salvation is a gift of God. With all our preparation we are not secure until we have taken the helmet of salvation.

WE ARE KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD.

The helmet of salvation: In I Thess. 5:8 the helmet is spoken of as the hope of salvation. Here it is salvation itself. In Thessalonians, the hope was rather the hope of the second coming of Christ which was cherished by all who had accepted the salvation offered by the blood of Jesus which cleanses from all sin. "This consciousness of salvation which is a gospel hope," comments McPherson, "in the sense of a sure expectation, is the guarantee and pledge of victory."

A helmet is needed to protect the head for it is quite as vital as the heart. The head is the seat of all bodily activity, and an arrow aimed at the brain could strike death as quickly as when directed to the heart. The hardest strokes of the

enemy were usually aimed at the head, so from earliest times the helmet has been an article of defense. Soldiers of all armies, including those who fought in the World War, found them effective. Gradually the materials from which helmets are composed have become harder and better tempered, for much depends upon their protection. The center of sight, reason and intelligence must be protected to the limit of ability.

God furnishes the helmet of Salvation to protect the Christian against the doubts, fears and temptations hurled against him and thrust at his beliefs, convictions, and impressions. This helmet gives us assurance of whose we are, and what we have through Christ. Our faith, hope and love proceed from this conviction. Our helmet is salvation, a certain knowledge that we have been delivered from the consequences of sin in our life once and for all. Christ has saved us from our sins. We are acquitted. We are free from the penalty of wrong doing. Jesus has delivered us from all the guilt, power and penalty of sin. God lifts up our heads, He does not destroy us. "Look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh (Luke 21:28)." "And all flesh shall see the salvation of God (Luke 3:6)." "Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it (Acts 28:28)." Our appropriation of Christ's death upon the cross, whether we be Jew or Gentile, protects us from our spiritual foes. Each one of us can say (Luke 2:30), "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation." The Christian is armed as to his head. He is not liable to have his beliefs shattered by objections, criticisms, opinions, or suppositions of new thought or some clever concoctions of literary merit. The popular writer unpopular with God will not betray his intelligence and hope of glorious and full salvation. Are you wearing this helmet of salvation? Christ will wear this helmet as He comes to save His people, "For he put on . . . a helmet of salvation upon his head (Isa. 59:17)." This protection is no false hope of safety, as a helmet made of cloth or paper to ward off a sword. It protects. Jesus saves to the uttermost all who come unto the Father by Him. Salvation is of the past, of the present, and of the future, and all three aspects are with us. We cannot be sepa-

rated from them. The helmet must be worn constantly in battle; it cannot be laid aside. Our salvation is moment by moment. We need to be constantly delivered from our sin. We must daily clothe ourself with all that the Gospel gives us of the will of God and the power of His Spirit to be able to carry on to the end of our day, with a result pleasing to God, and advancing us towards our goal in Him.

Salvation to Paul was a growth in grace. It necessitated a never-ending appropriation of His spirit and grace. Knowledge that we are saved by the grace of God is the best protection to our eyes, hands, feet, appetites, musings and desires. If we are saved for another world we will not be lost in this present evil world. Because we are saved we will not do what we might if we were not sure about it. Satan wants to make us doubtful and wavering. A wavering arm seldom hits its mark with gun, rifle, or bolt against the forces of evil. The helmet of salvation gives us all the confidence in ourselves, because we are confident in God and the ultimate triumph of right over all obstacles.

OFFENSIVE WARFARE.

And the sword: So far Paul has been speaking of defensive weapons: the girdle, the breastplate, the sandals, the helmet—now comes a sword for defense and offense. The sword likewise has survived from earliest times. Modern mechanical warfare is putting greater distance between the foe and his opponent, but the fanfare of the Roman world and the warfare of the Christian have much in common. The struggle is a hand-to-hand combat. Swords with keen-cutting edges are important. There was great progress from the crude stone sword used by earliest man and the keen Damascus blade of steel with its double edge. Some of the early swords wounded by their very weight rather than their keenness. Gradually, however, a sharp edge became more desirable, for a sword must be handled quickly and with deadly aim if a blow is to be parried or dealt.

Like the Roman warrior, the Christian must hold his ground and avoid personal injuries; he must go forth to the attack to destroy evil before it causes the destruction of another. A Christian is more than a safe, quiet, unofficial ob-

server of a conflict; he must be on one side or the other in active battle. "With what piercing reproofs, what keen thrusts of argument, what double-edged irony and dexterous sword-play, in smiting the enemies of the Cross of Christ," we, with Paul rebuke Elymos the sorcerer or come to verbal blows with strange doctrines subverting the people and disrupting the membership of the established churches.

The sword carried in the right hand is not to be an ornament hung upon a wall or kept in a glass case. A fight is on our schedule. We must fight the good fight of faith. The believer's sword is two-edged, cutting both ways. It brings condemnation, "But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked (Isa. 11:4)." The mouth of Christ is spoken of as a sword, "He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword (Isa. 49:2)." This sword is to be wielded by His followers. "Let the high praises of God be in their mouths, and a two-edged sword in their hand (Ps. 149:6)." Christ taught His disciples to be proficient in handling this sword. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God . . . Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God . . . Get thee hence, Satan (Matt 4:4, 7, 10)." We fight this same adversary; the same weapon chosen by Christ and proven effective by Him is to be the weapon used by us to bring victory. The Word of God is our defense. We are to wield this Word in our significant and deadly spiritual battle. A pilot has his charts, a scholar his books, and a soldier his sword. Great battles have been fought with the swords of yesterday. If these swords were gathered together and could speak, what wonderful tales of valor would be disclosed. The swords of Cæsar, Alexander, Cromwell, Napoleon won victory. But if the Word of God as printed and used in Holy Scripture could speak; if the Bible of Moody, Whitefield, Torrey, Sunday, Smith, could talk, what far more wonderful battles with self, sin and Satan could be told! The flash and spark of clashing steel is nothing in comparison with the impact of God's Word upon the blows of pride, deceit and malignity hurled by Satan against the faith of the Christian. The sword is for

use. Are you wielding it effectively? Christ needs your efficient co-operation if the world is ever to be saved. You need the tutelage of Christ. He is waiting to train you for effective service. Will you be a pupil of His? Will you fight against the powers of evil, and come to grips with Satan?

FURNISHED BY THE SPIRIT.

Of the spirit: Of the Holy Spirit because the sword is furnished by the Spirit, made by the Spirit and directed in use by the Spirit, to overcome sin and the tempter. The Holy Spirit teaches us how to use the Bible. We need to be taught. Alone, many people go to sleep over it. Guided by the Spirit, they adventure as explorers from beauty to beauty, from thrill to thrill, and blessing to blessing. The Holy Spirit will teach us how to use the Bible, even as He taught the men of old to use it and speak for God to His chosen people and call sinners to repentance. "Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (II Pet. 1:21)." The Spirit's sword is also the written Word of God. When Edward VI was being crowned king of England, swords from France and Ireland were delivered to him as an emblem of his authority and as a personal arsenal. After receiving them he said, "There is yet another sword—the sacred Bible, which is the sword of the Spirit, and without which we are nothing, neither can do anything." Unless God's Spirit uses us we are less than nothing. We are lacking in drive, force, and results. The apostles spake as the Spirit gave them utterance. It was the words of Spirit-guided men of Christ which broke up the Roman Empire; the barbarians were only a means to an end. God was fighting through the inspired words of apostles, evangelists and plain followers in the ranks.

The Word of God is a double-edged sword directed by the Spirit. The Spirit is not the Sword. The Christian cannot control the Spirit, but he uses the sword which the Spirit directs. We receive the Word from the Spirit which directs us in the manner of its use. We may not know why we plan to do a certain act, or why we speak. After we have prayed for guidance, the Spirit will use our voice, at times unknown to ourselves. Spurgeon tells of a painter being converted through

hearing him say, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world," while Spurgeon was trying out the acoustics of the Crystal Palace, London, in which he was later to speak. Those words reached the painter way up near the roof and led to his conversion. Why did Spurgeon use that particular verse on that particular day? The Spirit directed those words to the heart of a sinladen soul. The Spirit will convey the words to us if we are willing to receive them. Are you willing to have the Spirit speak, or does some sin stand in the way between you and perfect service? The fighting arm must be well and strong or the blow from the sword will be ineffective. How many carry the sword in a sheath at their side! Their Bibles are closed and dust-covered, or buried under a lot of secular reading, or hidden in their pocket. Bring the Bible out into the open, and have it opened. The words used by the Spirit are God's words, not man's words. Man is like the material from which a record is made, or like the horn of a radio which emits the voice but is not the voice. The sword of God Himself, not ourself, is indignation against evil or wrong. The Word of God must be hid in our heart.

A good sword may be wielded by a poor swordsman and be ruined and ineffective. The Bible is the law of the Lord and can convert the heart. Let us ask the Spirit to guide us in the proper use of the Word of God. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." A certain missionary, being surrounded with a hostile group of heathen with their bristling armament, faced them with these words, "I will fight you." Reaching for his Bible he continued, "But wait, until I get my sword."

THE MEDIUM OF VICTORY.

Which is the word of God: The written, revealed and living word of God is the sword. The truth spoken by Him in the Scripture, the truth revealed by Him to His believers; the force which extends God's Kingdom on earth; the light which leads a sinner home, the impregnable fortress which has survived the attacks of all ages, is the Word of God. "For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a dis-

cerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12).” Christ found Scripture effective in His Hour of temptation. God’s written word was used exclusively in rebuttal. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4).” God’s Word has never been overthrown by science, infidel, agnostic or critic. “In opposition to all error, to all false philosophy, to all false principles of morals, to all the sophistries of vice, to all the suggestions of the devil, the sole, simple and sufficient answer is the Word of God,” says Hodge. “It dissipates his doubts, it drives away his fears, it delivers him from the power of Satan.” “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness: And their word will eat as does a canker (II Tim. 2:15-17).” Face each day with God’s Word. In it we will find that encouragement, that challenge to higher and more Christlike living, that lift to another eternal world, which will give us enthusiasm, fairness, and strength to carry on with our burdens, obstacles and life, and come to the setting sun with a prayer for Divine mercy and pardon for our failures and sins. “Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.” “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly (Col. 3:16).” David gave this testimony, “By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer (Ps. 17:4).” It was God’s word which led Israel safely through all the dangers of the forty years wandering in the wilderness. Trouble came only when God’s word was ignored and others were followed. “Submit yourselves herefore to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you (Jas. 4:7).”

The Word of God has proven to be a smiting word. Hosea exhorts the Jews to repentance, reminding his hearers that “I have slain them by the words of my mouth (Hos. 6:5).” Isaiah warns against the wicked one and declares God’s power through His Word. “He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked (Isa. 11:4).” The more the Bible is used the more shall Satan be troubled and sin be vanquished in us and around us. The Bible is a sword in its brightness, sharpness,

durability and work. It brings terror to the evil doer, it demolishes the power of those who oppose it, defeating the enemies of God. It establishes the Truth of His Kingdom. It penetrates the seared conscience; it exposes evil. The Word of God is "mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds (II Cor. 10:4)." It alone can repel temptation.

How does God's word come to us? It comes directly through the Holy Scriptures, and it comes to us directly through the communications of the Spirit as it came to Peter and Paul. God still speaks to men in answer to their prayers. God's word may come to us indirectly through the spoken word of another who is directed by His spirit. "The word of God which is the sword of the spirit is not only the word of Divine truth laying God's thought upon the mind; and not only the word of Divine commandment laying God's purpose upon the will; it is also the Word of Divine promise laying Gods strengthening comfort upon the heart." "Show me the Christian who believes in and lives by every word which comes out of the mouth of God," says Dora Greenwell, "who expects to be answered in his prayers, to be aided in his deeds, to be strengthened in his conflicts, by the Savior in whom his person is accepted; who, in the simplest affair of everyday life, does God's bidding, because in His word He has so commanded it, and expects His help, because in the same word He has promised it; and I will show you one, like Stephen, full of faith and power—a Christian man or woman, who, in Christ, is, and has all things." Let us therefore, "take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

XVIII.

ABSOLUTE DEPENDENCE UPON GOD

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." —EPH. 6:18.

PRAY ON ALL OCCASIONS.

Praying always: The Christian's armor about which Paul has been speaking will be futile and useless without prayer. Prayer summons the army and places it in position to face the enemy. "It is not the armor or the weapons which make the warrior," says Hodge, "but courage and strength." Prayer supplies the spirit to fight the good fight of faith against the wiles of the devil; prayer makes the armor of the Christian effective. But every manner of prayer must be used and every avenue of approach to God followed if conflict with sin is to be waged with success. It is a Christian's duty and privilege to talk with God who never fails. With God constantly in thought, prayer brought into every moment of life keeps our heart open to receive any message He may have for us. "Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you (I Thess. 5:17, 18)." "Continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving (Col. 4:2)." "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation, the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak (Matt. 26:41)." "Pray that ye enter not into temptation (Luke 22:40)." "Watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is (Mark 13:33)." Men ought always to pray and not to faint (Luke 18:1)." "Pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all those things which shall come to pass (Luke 21:36)."

Prayer covers every crisis and hour of need, all emergencies; every occasion, the smallest incident, all moments of temptations, sickness and health, plenty and want, success and

failure; prayer applies to those in the midst of loved ones who are left as Job, bereft of all that had been possessions. Prayer is an attitude of readiness for whatever the day may bring forth. Prayer includes the field of public, family and private prayer; social and secret talks with God; and stated and occasional reaching out for the mercies of a loving Heavenly Father. Prayer reaches out toward God, claims the resources of heaven, and follows the gleam.

USE ALL VARIETIES OF PRAYER.

With all prayer: Prayer, like flowers of the field, has many colors, forms and varieties, fragrance and beauty. None of the various ways of reaching out to God are to be forgotten or neglected. Prayer contains several elements, among which are confession, thanksgiving, intercession, supplication and praise. Our needs necessitate all possible forms of prayer. "Continue instant in prayer (Rom. 12:12)," to discover the will of the Lord. This may require sudden and deliberate prayer, oral and mental, and formal and instantaneous petition. Prayer becomes those who love the Lord. *Pilgrim's Progress* describes Christian as being forced to put up his sword and betake himself to another weapon called Prayer, as he cries, "O Lord, I beseech Thee, deliver my soul." Satan dreads nothing more than prayer, which arrays the forces of God against Him. Temptation loses its power when prayer is brought to bear against its allurements. "Habitual prayer excludes habitual sinning, and habitual sinning excludes prayer." The presence of sin minimizes the power of prayer. It would be as sensible to drive with foot and emergency brakes drawn tight as to live in sin and try to progress through prayer. "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve."

DEFINITE PETITION.

And supplication in the spirit: We are not only to use all general forms of prayer but also to find individual and particular methods which will be helpful. There is a distinction between supplication and prayer. Prayer covers the entire scope of requests to God and conversation with Him. Supplications limit themselves to requests of an imploring nature, beseeching Him to avert some evil or deliver from some dread

punishment or temptation. God says (Zech. 12:10), "I will pour out the spirit of grace and supplication." Paul knew that this practice "shall turn to my salvation through your prayers and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:19)." Supplication is fervent, effectual, importunate prayer. It does not necessarily imply that we get into a fever of earnestness over it, but that we desire with all our hearts to be what He wishes us to be and are ready for Him when He comes. Petitions frequently take the form of prayer lists enumerating requests we wish to have answered and will not cease seeking until an answer comes from God. Petitioners watch with all the eagerness of a sower for sprouting seed. Though praise and adoration are always found in prayer, our hearts are frequently torn with anguish, unsatisfied longings requiring satisfaction, or the knowledge that God wishes otherwise. We entreat with humble, earnest prayer for an answer and His will in us. Every true believer appears before the Throne of Grace as a suppliant.

Prayer and supplications are to be "in the Spirit"—the Spirit of God—under whose influence we labor, and assisted by whom we hope to live acceptably to Him whom we serve. The Spirit guides us to the truth. We are as dependent upon the Spirit as one examining the wonders of the subterranean passages of the Carlsbad Caverns is upon the guide who is familiar with hazards and beauties to be revealed along the unfolding trail. A prayer made in the Spirit will be a believing prayer. The suppliant knows the Holy One addressed is able and willing to help and do more than is requested. The Holy Spirit is to be "the surrounding, penetrating, transforming atmosphere of the spirit of the praying Christian." "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered (Rom. 8:26)." We strive and labor according to the will of God, under the impulse and guidance of the Spirit. The Christ in us is the author of all true prayer. Jesus dwelling in our hearts enables us (Jude 20) to pray "in the Holy Ghost." As a taper or lamp will go out in a vacuum, so our

Light will be extinguished except the Holy Spirit be with us to give life and power and heat. Prayer depends much upon the atmosphere which surrounds it. Prayer is to be guided by the Spirit.

VIGILANCE IN PRAYER.

And watching thereunto: This exercise requires alertness and care lest we sleep at our post. The best equipped and trained army may be defeated by failing to watch. A man journeying with little money need not hesitate to travel late at night, or take undue care of the route followed. But one traveling with much money or valuables needs to watch companions, road and stopping places. A Christian's time is a precious commodity. Its use requires careful watching. "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak (Matt. 26:41)." "Watch and pray that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man (Luke 21:36)." We need to watch because we "know not when the time is" that the Son of man will come. We need to watch ourselves and others whose lives and souls may be in our hands. The lookout on a great ocean liner has the tremendous responsibility of safeguarding the passengers against floating icebergs, derelict vessels, hidden reefs, approaching storms and that which may cause havoc and loss of crew, passengers, cargo and vessel. He guards against weariness, laxness, negligence. We are God's lookouts. Prayer establishes communication with God. Keep the line of communication open. An army cut off from its supplies is doomed. A Christian isolated from God is lost. Watching is necessary lest we fall from that high estate unto which we are called, and in which we may have lived for a season. Judas was napping when Satan tempted him to sell His Savior for thirty pieces of silver. Pray and watch for the answer to prayer as a mother longs for an answer to a letter from her far distant boy, or watch as an investor waits for income from invested capital. Long for the answer to prayers more than they who long for the coming of morning after a weary night's vigil or journey.

PERSIST IN PRAYER.

With all perseverance: The preposition "in" substituted for "with" adds clarity. Prayer is to be saturated with the purpose to continue in a course believed to be right and in harmony with the will of God. Jacob wrestled all night with the angel of God. Continue in the Spirit in spite of any counter influence, opposition or discouragement. He that has begun a work in you will not leave it until it is finished if we give Him the chance. Having endured the shame and pain of the Cross, Christ cried out, "It is finished." "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer (Rom. 12:12)." Persevere in prayer for the ends commanded by the revealed word of God. "Men ought always to pray and not to faint (Luke 18:1)." Christ gave us an example and pattern. Few are called upon to pray as He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. Perseverance means continuance unwearied by delay and undaunted by opposition.

PRAY SUBMISSIVELY.

And supplication: This verse has frequent repetition of the word "all." The word all, though absent, is implied here. We humbly pray for evils to be averted and blessings to be showered upon us. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that I will do that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it (John 14:13, 14)." What better invitation to persistent supplication for God's mercy, pardon and renewing. Supplications and earnest entreaties are not limited to the penitent crying, "Lord, save me or I perish." They may be voiced for all the lost, by those who crave His help in guiding others to seek Jesus as their Savior by saying, "Sirs, we would see Jesus." It is a privilege to lead the lost to the Lord. The beseeching and imploring prayer of one anxious to be a fisher of men has the same tone as that of the woman whose child was nigh to death who besought the Great Physician to come and restore. None other would do. He must come.

PRAY FOR ALL THE CHURCH.

For all saints: Saints are those who truly love the Lord and eagerly wait His appearing. Prayer begins with self, it ends

with the lost world outside of Christ, and embraces all believers engaged in preaching the Gospel. "We help ourselves by being interested in others. Praying for others makes it easier for ourselves." A person may have a narrow field at home and limited talents, yet through the reach of prayer share the interests and results of those who are in the midst of great victories and witness for Christ in the dark corners of the world. Our prayers reach the uttermost parts of the world. We pray best for ourselves when we pray for others. Our petitions may cause a merchant tempted to dishonesty to give true measures; a prodigal son to turn homeward steps; a sorrowing heart to let Jesus wipe tears away; a tempted believer to have the faith of Job and receive a final reward. Prayer can give courage, endurance, perseverance, and purity to us and the saints in Caesar's household. Soldiers of the Cross fight a squad, but pray for the army of the Lord. Even saints are not beyond the need of our prayers. Hold up the hands of church-leaders throughout the world with your prayers. The Captain of our salvation leads and gives His angels charge of us. A common foe is faced. We are not in single combat with Satan. His hosts of angels are in conflict with the angels of the Lord. Forget not the saints in your prayers.

XIX.

MY GOSPEL

"And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel" —EPH. 6:19.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER.

And for me: The armor of the Christian is not complete without prayer in all its forms for all occasions and for all people. Paul having urged prayers for the saints, now appeals for prayers for himself. Paul felt the need of intercessory prayer. As a representative of God, he felt the need of receiving strength from the prayers of others lest he fail in doing what God wanted him to do and what he knew to be the will of God. Churches were to pray for Corinth, Macedonia, Philadelphia, and for him. Notice, no mention is made of his imprisonment, or his desire to be free from prison bars; he only asks for strength to do his duty and tell the good news of God's power to save to the uttermost all who came unto the Father by him. Unaided by the prayers of others, moments of discouragement, feelings of weakness, and a sense of the hopelessness of trying single handed to face the evils and powers of Rome might creep over him. The prayers of the saints throughout the church gave him vision, courage and strength. If his message failed, if his lips were silent, spoke weakly or wrongly, if his witness was unworthy of his Lord, Paul felt a part of the blame rested upon the Christians who failed to pray for him. What a tremendous thought this is, what a challenge. Are we using the power of prayer to the fullest advantage? Do mission fields fail to do their best for lack of our prayers? Do workers neglect to preach the Gospel, distribute gospel messages, or do the work of the Lord because we have forgotten to remember them by name before the Lord and plead the fulfillment of His promises in them? The Lamb's Book of Life contains many sins of omis-

sion. Frequently church members excuse absence from the Lord's house upon the plea of doing nothing wrong. If we are not doing something right, we are doing something wrong. Idle hands are as sinful as hands busy for the devil.

The Lord needs voices today. Pray that workers may gather the harvest which is waiting. "Brethren, pray for us (I Thess. 5:25)." "Praying also for us that God would open unto us a door of utterance to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I also am in bonds (Col. 4:3)." "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me (Rom. 15:30)." "Ye also helping together by prayer for us (II Cor. 1:11)." "I trust that through your prayers, I shall be given unto you (Philemon 22)" "Pray for us that the work of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified (II Thess. 3:1)." "For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply the Spirit of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:19)." If Paul could not do his best work without the prayers of the saints, neither can any missionary, pastor, Sunday school teacher, president of an organization, choir, sexton, officer of the church, or any believing soul. As we pray for each other, a new comradeship, fellowship and nearness to the Lord will result.

WE REPRESENT CHRIST.

That utterance may be given unto me: Words of testimony are not wholly dependent upon our education, culture, and worldly experience for value. These have worth, but the Lord can use the humblest vassal to honor Him. His voice is neither silent now, nor will it be in the centuries which lie ahead—if the Lord delays His coming until that time. A full heart, and gratitude for God's undeserved mercy and blessing will urge us to speak. But to say what God wants us to say demands prayer, sensitiveness to the Lord's leading, and the inspiration of His enabling Spirit. After Peter and John had been released from prison with the warning to "go and preach no more at that place," they prayed (Acts 4:29), "Lord, Behold their threatenings; and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak the word." The apostles

did not dare be independent of the Holy Spirit's guidance—they lived in dangerous times. So they "continued in prayer and watched in the same with thanksgiving (Col. 4:2)." No wonder (Acts 2:4) "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." The ability to speak and the matter of their speech was given them of God. Their words might be addressed to Cæsar, or a jailer, but generations of men of all time were to hear. Our audience may appear to be more limited, but Mrs. Smith to whom we speak talks to Mrs. Jones, and Mrs. Jones tells Mrs. White, and so the news spreads. The Bible as God's word shall triumph over the wrecks of time.

Of what shall I speak? Tell others that prayer changes things; that sin can be forgiven; that the blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin; that salvation is a known fact; that Christ makes the invitation to salvation universal. Pray that utterance may be given you; speak of the things of the Kingdom of God, of heaven and of righteousness. Pray for opportunities, for open doors and open lips. "It shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak, for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you (Matt. 10:19, 20)." Paul accepted this promise and experienced its power. "Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion (II Tim. 4:17)." Speech obtained from the Lord will never hurt the church or the cause of Christ by its rashness or vainness. Our own words are apt to be tinged with pique, personal suffering, revenge, satire, and poisoned barbs. The word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword. Speak the word of God as Jesus addressed it to Satan and results will exceed expectations or desires.

With Paul, be more concerned about the message than the results; the opportunity for unfolding the Gospel than the opportunity to have another appointment or fulfill an engagement. Pray that utterance may be given others, and us, to speak for Jesus and do His will at all times. Our lips are living mediums through which God speaks. The scientist gives others in the few symbols of a formula the result of

hours of research; the Christian by the mystery of prayer tells what God has done for him and opens a new way of life to a despairing soul. An invalid by quiet, restful, serene waiting upon the Lord can preach to other patients in the ward, to doctors, nurses and visitors a more eloquent sermon than may be broadcast from some great metropolitan preacher and pulpit over a great network of stations. An office employer by prayer and faithful rendering of life and work may do a finer work for the Lord than could be done by many a zealous personal worker. Pray that utterance may be given you. If your lips are sealed, pray that others may speak. Even the dumb by prayer can tell the unsearchable love of Christ to others.

A PROOF OF GOD'S LEADING.

That I may offer my mouth boldly: When Paul opened his mouth, he had something to say. Many are more concerned with opening their mouths and talking than about saying anything worth while, or saying what God wants said. Speech can be like sounding brass or a clanking cymbal. "O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged (II Cor. 6:11)." Paul knew that whether he stood before Caesar or Onesimus he must speak the truth straight from the shoulder in all sincerity, frankness, confidence, love and the urge of the Holy Spirit. Some one must have been praying in the spirit when Paul wrote, "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth (Rom. 1:15, 16)." One never thinks of Paul as a physical, mental or moral coward, yet he had many weak moments in the inward man. He frequently writes of his need of bold speech lest others intimidate him or cause him to cower before those who would imprison him or stop his tongue. Paul prayed always, "that in nothing" he might "be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so also now, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death (Phil 1:20)." It was his wish to "keep nothing back but to make an open, undisguised declaration of the gospel." No excuse could be given for apology, compromise, silence, covering over, acqui-

escence or weakness. How close to Paul can we stand in this matter? Is God our mouth? While Paul prayed for the stimulation of sympathetic companions, and for boldness to speak as God would have him, he prayed with even greater frequency for a revelation of any personal weaknesses or hindrance to the free passage of the word of God through him. Until this was done, the prayers of others would be of less value or little avail. When we have done our part, the Lord will do His. "But the Lord said unto me, Say not I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces; for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord (Jer. 1:7, 8)." "Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead; fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house Go, get thee to them . . . and speak unto them and tell them, Thus saith the Lord God, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear (Ezek. 3:8, 9, 11)." Speak boldly for Jesus who speaks boldly before the Father pleading our cause with groanings which cannot be uttered. We will want Christ to plead our case when we stand before the judgment seat of God. We will need His mercy then. Let us exhibit a little more boldness in our witnessing for Him.

JESUS DEPENDS UPON US.

To make known: Paul was ready. Are we? "So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek (Rom. 1:15, 16)." There was no question but that even in his imprisonment, God had given him an open door to preach the Gospel (Matt. 10:18-20). Paul had experienced many close calls. On more than one occasion all seemed lost. Had his faith been less or his zeal less, he would have been disheartened. But this little man with a mighty soul saw in him the fulfillment of Christ's prophecy, "and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and

the Gentiles, But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak." The Lord was giving him an opportunity when under fire to show how a Christian can stand. God is no respecter of persons. Can you stand? If so, how? Do you stand complaining? Are you sorrowful? Do you blame God, and ask why? Or do you stand with face up and eyes forward to testify, "Even though He slay me, yet still will I trust Him." We need a few more Jobs. Are you willing to be a Job in your generation? "The word of the Lord standeth sure." Christ made God known. "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself." Never be intimidated, modify your preaching by what others may say or do. We please God, not man. We are to preach the Gospel to every creature; proclaim the glad news so all may hear and know the truth. How much better this Gospel is than scandal, criticism, a choice bit of news or the organ recital, given by those who have been through operations. "God said," is better than "he said," or "she said." "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth." Bibles give the word of God, but millions of Testament leagues are needed, and American Bible Societies, Chinese Bible Societies, and Bible Colporters, if the word of God is to be broadcast over the world.

DIVINE REDEMPTION.

The mystery of the gospel: Man's understanding is not equal to the wisdom of God. Our reason can never lead us to the discovery of God who is past understanding. His ways are not our ways, nor are our ways His ways. The ways of God will ever be a mystery. We are to "live by another spirit, act from another's strength, live by another's will, and aim at another's glory." The wisdom of God dazzles like the brilliance of the sun. The eye of man cannot behold the wisdom of God with a comprehending eye. The mystery of which Paul speaks here is the mystery of the Gospel which has been kept secret throughout preceding ages, but which is now revealed for our glory. "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory (I Cor. 2:7)." This mystery is the mystery of the new man in Christ Jesus; society transformed by an indwelling

Jesus and a church which is the living Body of Christ. This is revealed to us (Eph. 3:3) "by revelation was made known unto me the mystery." Great is the mystery of godliness. "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory (I Tim. 3:16)." We are to boldly proclaim Jesus as the Savior of the world and Jesus as an indwelling possibility for everyone. By living with them in such intimate relationship, Christ may "make them so meek and gentle that a child may lead them to anything good, yet so strong that fire and faggot shall not frighten them into sin. They are taught all things are theirs, yet they dare not take a penny, a pin from the wicked by force. They can pray for life and at the same time desire to die."

Various mysteries are mentioned in the Gospel, which are: 1. The mystery of the kingdom of heaven. 2. The mystery of Israel's blindness during this age. 3. The mystery of the translation of living saints at the end of this age. 4. The mystery of the New Testament Church as one body composed of Jew and Gentile. 5. The mystery of the Church as the Bride of Christ. 6. The mystery of an indwelling Christ. 7. The mystery of God, even Christ. 8. The mystery by which Godlikeness is restored to man. 9. The mystery of iniquity. 10. The mystery of the seven stars in *Revelation*. 11. The mystery of Babylon.

THE REVELATION OF GOD.

Of the gospel: The good news of the Gospel is received by faith. God's will is revealed and His righteousness at all times exhibited. God knows the Ethiopians fought against great odds. He knows the innocent are suffering. The important fact is not, are the innocent being slaughtered in battle, but are those who are killed in battle ready to face their God regardless of which side of the battle they be found. It is no loss for a Christian to die. "For me to die is gain." Our concern is to see that those who die are cleansed by the blood of the Lamb. The Gospel is to be proclaimed a universal gospel, for all peoples, for all times, and in all conditions of servitude to sin. God's love for the world was revealed through Christ, and (Phil. 1:5-7) the "fellowship of the gospel." At

times we may be used to defend the Gospel. "I am set for the defense of the gospel (Phil. 1:17)." How many are needed today to stand for the faith in schools and colleges, in the press, on the lecture platform, in politics, and over the air. We have nothing to fear for the Gospel, but we have a lot to fear for ourselves. Four gospels are spoken of in the Bible: 1. The gospel "of the kingdom"; 2. the gospel "of the grace of God"; 3, the "everlasting gospel," and what Paul chooses to call "my gospel." Some speak of the latter as the fifth gospel or "the gospel according to us"—the living message we give the world after reading the message of Christ in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Are we preaching the Gospel boldly, with open lips to make known the will of God? Are we praying that utterance may be given to speak boldly the things of righteousness, love, mercy, peace, and salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord? Jesus is waiting for this message from our lives. Shall we pray, "Here I am, Lord; use me as Thou wilt"?

XX.

THE DIGNITY OF OUR CALLING

"For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." —EPH. 6:20.

THE CALL OF THE GOSPEL.

For which: Paul was God's specially chosen representative to declare the Gospel to all men, but especially to the Gentiles. The responsibility involved is so great that Paul feels unable to fulfill its obligations without the stimulation of the prayers of God's people everywhere. On behalf of this gospel and in its particular interests he is about to speak. Would that all of us were as clear, as humble, as conscious of help from above, as impelled by a great urge to tell the Gospel we have experienced in our lives and be as silent or at least as charitable in regard to those promises or gifts which we have not as yet realized in our lives. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God (II Cor. 5:20)." Even those who are just beginning to follow Him might give this message to their friends, "Be ye reconciled to him." Jesus commands us as He did the disciples of old, "Go, teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matt. 28:19)."

WE ARE ALL AMBASSADORS.

I am an ambassador: It is an honor to be a disciple of Jesus, to sit at His feet and learn the great issues of life, to feel His hand upon our troubled brow, to depend upon Him for strength, to be a soldier of the cross and follow His lead in the conflict against sin. It is a privilege to speak to others from the fulness of our hearts concerning His wondrous love for us and all who are in sin. An overflowing heart cannot but speak of Him. But Paul is thinking now of something

more—of a dignity of office, an honor which had been given, a commission assigned—he is an ambassador, an ambassador of no temporal earthly king whose glory may diminish, but an ambassador of a heavenly King who reigns forever and forever, King of kings, and Lord of lords. He must therefore hold himself inviolate as a representative of his Ruler and King. None stand higher than he, as speaking for his Sovereign. The King has given him authority to officially represent Him and speak as his accredited spokesman. How many Christians have such an exalted feeling concerning their office as believers, and employ the attendant special privileges? Do we move as ambassadors, going nowhere our King would not go, speaking and acting as only our King would do? Would Jesus ever find us doing what He would not do? A mundane ambassador never relaxes; the eye of the public is upon him. The people in the country in which he is living will have no more exalted opinion of his king than he furnishes them. What sort of a Lord do others see through our attitudes, expressions, actions and manner of mien and life? We are sent by Christ to speak for Him and explain the message He has written in the Holy Scriptures; we are to forgive others who have sinned against us in the name of Christ; we are to invite others to accept the citizenship of heaven; we are to make no compromises or treaties with Satan or his agents. God through us would tell a troubled world how to make peace with Him and be reconciled to Him. The terms of salvation are in our possession. Have we delivered the message, or are we afraid of possible consequences of its reception?

All in sin are at war with God. We are commissioned to tell them how to find Jesus and be reconciled to Him. May we always be conscious of Him whom we represent and the message delivered to us as to Paul! The office of an ambassador is high; it will brook no unworthy practice, no lessening of the words as delivered; it tolerates the receiving of no bribes from the world. How many Christians compromise with the world! Because they, with Peter, are ashamed to own their Lord, the church is losing its exclusive field of operation. Its commission has not been taken away, because God has no other office through which He may speak. Every church is an embassy of God.

HANDICAPS IN SERVICE.

In bonds: A strange paradox is here. The law of nations makes the person of an ambassador inviolable. An ambassador cannot be put in chains, be imprisoned or arrested. The person of a representative of a king is sacred. But here is an ambassador of God in chains. It was customary to place a light chain on the hand of a prisoner of high estate who was awaiting trial. The other end of this chain was attached to a guard. This gave the prisoner some freedom of action and life. But Paul was apparently suffering a greater indignity because both hands were in chains. His office had been ignored by his captors. Satan had stirred the minds of the Jews to be bitter because the Gentiles were to receive the offer of salvation and share the privilege of God's loving provision. "For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain (Acts 28:20)." What to some would have been an insurmountable, intolerable obstacle was to this devout believer an opportunity and glory. For how else would he have an opportunity to testify of Jesus in the courts of Rome, save as a prisoner? Satan intended these chains to be an insult to God and their irritation and inconvenience a discouragement to devotion and loyalty. Satan hoped coarse soldiers would discourage piety and dampen the enthusiasm of the apostle to the Gentiles. But the grace of God is sufficient for the needs of the moment. Grace was given to be more conscious of office as an ambassador than of the rattling of a prisoner's chains. If a great indignity was to be suffered, the prisoner's hands and feet were both shackled. Whether this was true of Paul at this time we do not know. Of this we are sure, God did not leave Paul, and Paul did not prove untrue to His Lord and Master.

When we are apt to complain about unfair difficulties in service; when we feel a sense of unfair treatment, and incline ourselves to wailing and complaint; when unwilling to go all the way and driven to try some other religion or so-called science—think of Paul and his brave, unflinching service to the Lord. Be as bold as Paul who stood before Agrippa and after almost persuading him to be a Christian said, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, ere both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these

bonds (Acts 26:29).” Paul (II Tim. 4:7), had “kept the faith.” An ambassador from heaven must not quail before an earthly throne. When a Christian reports to God before the throne in heaven, it must never be said that a man, be he soldier, judge, or king, had ever made him forget whose he was and whom he was serving. All face handicaps, dark moments, testings, disappointments, heart-breaking experiences which reveal our hearts to ourselves and show us how weak we are. Then comes the opportunity to demonstrate why we are serving Christ, and how far we are willing to go for Jesus, to what limits we will extend ourselves without losing our faith, how much we will take for Jesus’ sake. The world is trying to find out whether Christians can “take it” or whether they will leave Him. Stand up and walk as ambassador of the Greatest who ever trod upon this earth. Face the world as you would if Jesus were visibly present beside you, and were watching every word and action. What have we to fear? Take the world, but give me Jesus!

THE SPHERE OF HIS SPEECH.

That therein: Paul needs the prayers of God’s people to strengthen him in his resolve to always uphold the office of an ambassador and give a good account of his high calling. II Tim. 1:7-12 speaks more clearly of the point in his mind: They might bind him, but they cannot bind the word of God. This has been the spirit of martyrs of all time and of missionaries and pastors of all ages. What can man do? Men are called to preach the gospel. With the call goes equipment for service. Wherever work may lead, in all the mysteries of the Gospel message, in all the providential leading of God’s spirit, pray to speak boldly. Have you ever trembled, lowered your voice, or averted your eyes; have you ever hesitated until it was too late to go or speak; have you ever been conscious of failure to use an opportunity to be true to vows, your inner belief, and what you know God would have you do? How stimulating at such times is the thought that somewhere a mother, a wife, a child, or a believer is praying for you! Many have been restrained from sin through the influence of an unseen but real power exerted by an unknown praying dis-

ciple. For this reason, missionaries plead for our prayer. Pastors can step into pulpits and preach with new power, when two or three are gathered together with the common purpose of pleading for God's message to be delivered through *him*.

TESTIFY WITH BOLDNESS.

I may speak boldly: Do you believe the unsearchable riches of Christ are true? Are you sure Jesus is waiting to give these as an inheritance to those who rely upon Him as a personal Savior and accept the obligations of discipleship? Then speak boldly, with confidence and assurance. Followers of Jesus do not stand in the dark for He is the Light of the world. The boldness of sin demands boldness in preaching. A disciple is not to be "like a smooth file, a dull knife, or a sentinel afraid to fire his gun as a note of warning." Archbishop Benson wrote of times when his own tongue faltered when it should speak plainly; of times when his own standards of holiness varied in his thoughts and much more in practice; when long habits of self-indulgence paralyzed him; when he would exhort others to self-sacrifice and self-denial, but his faults of temper marred his works and lost him the confidence of others.

Christ's ambassador was about to speak before Rome's highest tribunal. Hesitation might lose a soul. Possibly, the future of the church hinged upon his testimony. God grant him the same boldness now that he found so natural when in a group of his friends. It was not hard to speak the truth to those seeking light, but in the face of hostile, dull minds when life hung in the balance, it would be easy to compromise, minimize, or be quiet. Paul was no stranger to unpopular causes. "At my first answer, no man stood with me, but all forsook me (II Tim. 4:16)." Bands did not intimidate him. He had preached with no adulteration the message upon the first visit to Rome, but he was older now and a bit more weary. This would not excuse a faltering tongue. He was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, why not speak boldly even in bands. "But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention (I Thess. 2:2)." Paul was unchanged. The body might be a bit more bent, the hair a trifle whiter, capacity for exer-

tion lessened, but the Spirit was young and vigorous. "For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death (Phil. 1:19, 20)." Paul prays therefore for new clearness in testimony and new power in witness. The world waits for such testimonies. Jeremiah had not flinched. The "word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision daily. Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay (Jer. 20:8, 9)." Pray for boldness. The greatest tragedy is dumbness of soul, an inarticulate faith, a songless believer, an extinguished light, and a silent Christian.

Dullness may be caused by a persistent wrong choice which takes away vitality in Christian service. Some have no message for lack of real Christian experience. They have not been born again. Lack of boldness may also be caused by a timidity which patiently endures, serves faithfully, lives honestly, and prays devoutly, but never gets beyond the shallows near shore. Launch out into the deep. We are to confess God before men before we have a right to expect Christ to confess us before the Father which is in heaven. Some ask how and what are we to speak? Speak as God commands, speak denouncing sin, speak, in love, after having taken the mote out of your own eye. Boldness comes from a clear conscience and peace made with God. See with the fear of God in our hearts and not the fear of man in our minds.

OUR CHRISTIAN DUTY.

As I ought to speak: "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." Duty is clear—go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Paul's commission on the Damascus road can leave no reasonable doubt, the message was divinely inspired. Speak. Duty had been performed in the past. "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures (Acts 17:2)." "For

though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me . . . if I preach not the gospel (I Cor. 9:16)." Everything depends upon the message. How can Rome hear without a preacher? How can America or China hear? Pray for clearness of speech, and a clear testimony of what Jesus has done. As an ambassador, we are to speak only of what He tells us, we are not to give our own opinions and beliefs.

The Roman prison was an arena in which greater laurels might be won for Christ. Bunyan, when offered freedom if he would stop preaching, answered instantaneously, "If you let me out today, I will preach again tomorrow." A traveler in the Orient tells of a despot to whom one was speaking of the superior claims of Christ. This ruler of unbelieving subjects called one of the faithful to him and commanded him to jump over a nearby precipice. Without delay, he went over the brink to his death. Another follower was called and asked to throw himself into the rushing water of a nearby river. He obeyed and went to his death. A third was commanded to plunge a sword in his heart. The sword instantly freed a soul from its earthly body. "Now," said the Eastern potentate, "what can you show of loyalty in the followers of your Lord, to excel this?" Communist students in China claim to be drawn to the movement because its followers seem willing to risk everything for their cause.

Shall Christians be silent, non-aggressive, and shrink from persecution and trouble? Shall followers of Jesus worship in secret? Paul prayed for courage to speak boldly. Cowardice in Christians is more worthy of condemnation than fear on a football field. A white feather does not belong to religion. Elliott the apostle to the American Indians, was unabashed by any situation which befell him. Alone and unflinching, he took the gospel to barbarous tribes. "I am about the work of the great God, and my God is with me, so that I fear neither you nor all the chiefs in the country—I will go on, and touch me if you dare." From such courage they shrank. "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God (II Tim. 1:8)." We are to be always ready to speak. "Be ready always to give an

answer to every one that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear (I Pet. 3:15)." Wait for His guidance in testimony. It shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak, when brought before rulers and kings (Matt. 10:18-20). Speak of Jesus, not of self. Jesus said, "I speak not of myself." Rash, heated, vain words are not of Christ. Speak words of love rather than condemnation. "Vengeance is mine, saith the the Lord, I will repay."

XXI.

TYCHICUS, A FAITHFUL SERVANT

"But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things." —EPH. 6:21.

CHURCH CORRESPONDENCE.

But that ye may know my affairs: The letter to the Ephesian church is about complete. There has been very little discussion of current topics, and practically no reference to himself or his condition. How different from the letters of today filled with our pains, aches and the details of our daily existence! Paul was thinking of their spiritual welfare and their condition in the Lord. He has pleaded with them, prayed for them, bared his heart for them, and now closes his epistle by satisfying their longing to know something about the condition of his health, the possibility of seeing him again and the progress of the Christian faith in Rome, and concludes with an apostolic blessing. This letter was intended for the readers of his day in the immediate vicinity of Ephesus. Its message has been immortal and will survive the lives of believers of all time. The letter has been read from the pulpits of all nations and has been of help and guidance to believers around the world. So God blesses the honest efforts of those who make His will their own. A stone thrown into the ocean, makes widening circles of ripples which reach the shores across the sea. God gives the increase. What a challenge to make each day count for the most and be used by God, to live in this generation, and to add to the building which is not made with hands eternal in the heavens!

The affairs of Paul and his condition were of tremendous importance to the church at Ephesus. If Paul's courage faltered, theirs would react. If the Gospel was spreading in Caesar's household there was hope for progress among the

worshippers of Diana and the makers of images for Diana's followers and the tourist trade. If Paul were able to carry on, and receive strength for daily needs, God would answer their prayers and enable them to let their lights shine before men. If all were well with Paul, the Ephesian prayers had been answered and their gatherings would assume new fervor as they launched out into greater depths of faith in their prayers for God's continued blessing upon the work of Paul and the disciples witnessing in the uttermost parts of the world.

This letter was to be read first by a small group of loving friends gathered in some home of the faithful; later, it was to be passed from hand to hand and carried by messenger to all who loved Paul and were looking for the Second Coming of Christ. Such a letter, in those days, was a treasure of great price. The pages would become worn and soiled as every word was read and reread. It was not only Paul's counsel to them but more—God had spoken through Paul to them. God waits to speak through us to others. How many of our letters are worth more than a single reading and the waste basket? How many of our letters can be found in boxes among the treasures of our friends? More would be kept if we used Paul's letters as ideals and brought our correspondence into subjection to the will of God. "Ye know my doctrine, my manner of life, my persecutions (II Tim. 3:10)." God's love, mercy, will, and truth are waiting to be revealed in our message to our friends.

The church is a spiritual family. It should be interested in what is happening in the family circle—what the members in China, Africa, and the Western plains, and the members in the cities and the country are doing. The church is the living Body of Christ. We are a part of it even though no more than a single red corpuscle. We are intimately related to the whole and have an influence over it. Let us tell the church what we are accomplishing through Christ who strengthens us; let us learn through correspondence and reading what Christ is doing for the believers in Korea, in India, in Labrador—and everywhere. The church is one in Christ. The church at Colossae had received correspondence from Paul. Now the church at Ephesus is about to hear from a district representative of the loving Master.

SHARE CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

And how I do: They already knew what Paul had been doing. In Rome he continued to do just what he had been doing in Ephesus and Athens and Jerusalem. Jesus Christ was the "same yesterday, today and forever." Paul was changing with experience, but this change was a deepening of faith in God, and an added consecration and devotion to the Cause for which he was willing to give his life. Jesus never failed him, Paul must never fail. Therefore the Ephesian church was not to hear of his recent activity but of Paul's physical necessities and those needs of personal comfort which they might supply. His friends were anxious to learn whether he would ever come to them again; whether God was blessing the Word so that an impact was really being made upon the times and Rome itself. They were familiar with the scorn, opposition and apathy which were universally present. Had these obstacles daunted the faith of Paul. The hope of Paul and his reactions affected the condition of the church, everywhere. They rose to no higher levels than their leader. Had God revealed some new truth, had any additional sign been received to indicate when Christ would come again? "The apostle and people, teacher and learners, were bound together by no common tie." "Ye would have plucked out your eyes, and have given them to me (Gal. 4:15)."

How clearly Paul again saw those Ephesian elders as he had last seen them by the side of the boat at Miletus when they tearfully bade him farewell. They had wept on his neck and had kissed him; with tear-filled eyes he had seen them fade from view and become lost in the haze of a retreating shore line. He owes them something so is sending a beloved messenger to answer their thousand questions. Does our common love for Christ bring us this interest in the personal and spiritual welfare of those who are called to follow Jesus? Is there a longing in our hearts to obtain news of the battle for right on all the far-flung battle-fronts? We need to have this interest in the welfare of the gospel workers as well as interest in the gospel. A splendid hobby would be that of taking out a denominational year-book, looking up the addresses of some of our missionaries in far corners of the world, and writing

to them messages of cheer and encouragement, relating the progress of the church in America or the homeland. We still need to emulate Paul and tell "how I do."

A LOYAL FELLOW-WORKER.

Tychicus: There are a great many short biographies in the Bible. This is one of them. Tychicus was one of the Asiatic Christians—possibly one from Ephesus. His name appears at various times in the history of the Early Church. His devotion to Paul early attracted his attention and Tychicus was soon added to the list of followers. He joined Paul in the third missionary journey and was with him at Rome during the first imprisonment and part of the second. Paul sent Tychicus to Ephesus to relieve Timothy, and enable Timothy to have a parting message with the aging leader who felt his time on earth was getting short. Acts 20:4 pictures Tychicus standing by Paul when the Jews were rising against him, and he goes into Asia with Paul. Second Timothy (4:12) tells of his being faithful to the very end. Apparently, from the year A.D. 59, when Paul was in Jerusalem, Tychicus rarely left him, except when being sent upon various missions to strengthen and comfort the churches struggling with their new faith and hope. What more or what better can be said of us at our going than that we were faithful brothers in Christ and ministers in the Lord?

TO THE CHURCH IN GENERAL.

A beloved brother: In relation to the work of the church in general as well as in personal ministry to Paul, Tychicus had been a faithful brother winning his way into the confidences and affections of those who knew him. His quiet, sincere love and devotion for the work of the Lord drew the disciples to him, as it will draw others today. Fellowship with Christ produced a sense of security and calmness. Few of the disciples bristled when Tychicus came into the midst. Christ lived in the heart of this loyal and loving follower. God said of Christ, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him"; Christ spoke of Himself as the "beloved" Son of God (Lu. 20:13). The letters of the early Christians referred to those who had endeared themselves to the church as beloved brothers and dis-

ciples. Paul was now commending his messenger to the church as a beloved brother upon whom they could lean, whom they would want to have in their homes. They might speak to him frankly and without heat upon the burdens of their inner life. Tychicus could be trusted to be discreet and hold secrets. What would our pastors say of us. How would Christ write letters of commendation to those to whom we are strangers? Would much be left unsaid? Would some need to be covered? What is your record? The Lord, the church, and every pastor needs those who are faithful, beloved brothers. A few such would lift many a burden from an aching heart and burden wearied shoulder. Let us see if we, by the grace of God, cannot be such to another. We cannot all be Pauls, but we can all be as true as Tychicus.

A MARK OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE IN ME.

And faithful minister in the Lord: If we are of the Lord we will know it and others will know it also. One of the marks of being in the Lord will be fidelity to the vows we have made and the responsibilities of our office. The word "minister" is frequently translated servant. Speaking of Tychicus (Col. 4:7), Paul adds "and fellow servant in the Lord." In First Corinthians (4:1, 2), he writes, "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. . . . It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." Second Corinthians (8:16-24) would imply that a part of the ministry of Tychicus had included a distribution of alms gathered for the poor at Jerusalem. A minister usually is an inferior officer; it is hardly probable that such is meant here. Paul was not one to draw lines of distinction, particularly at such a time as this. In Christ there was neither Jew nor Gentile; in Christ class distinctions are abolished. In Christ we are one. We become (Rom. 13:4) "ministers of God," (II Cor. 3:6) "ministers of the new testament." In (Gal. 2:17) Christ is called a minister. Being a faithful minister is conditioned upon our being in the Lord. The Lord gives us strength and life. He enables us; He is our Power; He is our message; He is our all. He was all to Tychicus. The words "faithful minister" might well have described either Paul or Tychicus. They both knew how to bow before the Throne of Grace, and yield their lives to Him in all sincerity and truth.

As we labor and help in the task of the church, would our pastor speak of our assistance as being always faithful where we ought to be, always loyal, always present, always standing by in time of need, always co-operating, always being the same to the face and back, always showing the spirit of Christ? Faithful ministers of Christ have nought of which they need to be ashamed; they need never hang their heads, or find the shadows, or slip unobserved here and there. The cover of night need never hide their activities. They need never see who is listening when they are speaking. The truth needs no such sentinels. Spies and sentinels tell of suspicion, distrust, warfare, but not fidelity. Let us consecrate ourselves without reserve to Him and His.

A LIVING EPISTLE.

Shall make known to you all things: Undoubtedly there was much that could not be written without misinterpretation. There were dangers on every hand. Personal matters needed to be left entirely to the judgment of those trusted messengers and loyal supporters of Paul who could be relied upon to report conditions as they were without prejudice, neither paring away from the truth nor adding to it. Tychicus could answer all these many questions in their hearts which they had not committed to writing; sympathetically, tenderly and completely. Tychicus could never take the place of Paul's radiant personality, but having been with him, coming directly from Rome, it would seem almost as though Paul had been there. The words carved upon a tombstone might well have been placed upon a tablet to the memory of Tychicus: "He served his Master and he loved his brethren." Paul was sending a letter in flesh and blood. Christ is sending us into the world as living epistles for Him. He wishes us to be true to Him, to represent Him, to describe the conditions of the world with Christ, to tell what can happen to a sin-filled life when Jesus enters it, and to live for Him and in Him. How many of us can say honestly that we are making known ALL things about Christ? Do we know Him well enough for this? Are we telling all that we know? Christ is sending us forth, as Paul sent his friend. May we be as faithful and devoted to our Lord and Master.

XXII.

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

"Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose that ye might know our affairs and that he might comfort your hearts."
—EPH. 6:22.

Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose: Tychicus was a messenger sent from Paul to bear the good news: news of Paul's condition in Christ while in prison; the progress of the church at Rome; and counsel from this aged, consecrated apostle to the Christians of all time. In all probability, Paul sent a word of encouragement concerning an expected early termination of his imprisonment. He was always doing his work as though it was his last testimony, yet was optimistic in the hope that the Lord might open the way, as He had done so many times before, to provide the way to carry on missionary journeys and take the news of salvation to another city living in darkness and sin. What an objective and spirit for us—living for Jesus as though today were our last and yet praying that God in His mercy might spare us for a long life of service to advance from point to point in our Christian experience and testimony!

Paul's message through Tychicus was personal. A letter at best says so poorly what needs to be said. It is so easy to emphasize what was never intended to be stressed; it is hard to put between the lines what should be read. A personal conversation with its tones of voice, lights upon the countenance, gleams of the eye, questions and answers and unlimited opportunity to go to the fullest detail, is far in advance of the best letter that has ever been written. A pressure of the hand and the physical presence is a message in itself. So Tychicus' visit was in itself an evidence of esteem and comfort. Through his friend, brother in Christ and fellow-minister, Paul was saying that every detail of their life—their crosses, their answered prayers, their testimony, their imprisonments, their

victories through Christ, were glorious experiences. He had never omitted them from his prayers. He had never grown cool or indifferent to their problems because removed of necessity for a long period from them. Tychicus, a messenger of the church of Christ in Rome to the church of Christ in Ephesus, bore a message of love, encouragement, blessing, and hope. The apostolic blessing so often given by Paul, when spoken by Tychicus, brought comfort and strength. God was with them. Let them patiently endure to the end as ambassadors of the King; persevere and be faithful.

THE VALUE OF INFORMATION.

That ye might know our affairs: Firsthand information was to be received concerning his work, health, spirits, handicaps, needs, growth in Christ and the condition of the harvest to be reaped. The condition of the church at Rome was of vital importance to the churches throughout the Roman empire. Was the church progressing in the capitol city, it might advance in the far distant province; was the message given in secret in Rome, it must needs be delivered in caves, behind barred doors and windows in maritime provinces; was it free and unfettered, then followers of Christ might freely make the sign of the cross boldly in marketplace, in temple area, and public place. Paul was fighting for the church throughout the empire; when in prison and out of prison, he preached at Rome and won those in Caesar's household to the teachings of his Master. How goes the battle? Paul was sitting at a point of advantage; Tychicus as a messenger brings the signs of the times and the progress of the battle to those who in the thick of the fight cannot see beyond their front-line trench. It is a good thing always to receive this word of encouragement. Student volunteers rather for conventions to hear missionaries from throughout the world bring good news. Denominational gatherings meet to summarize the work completed, in process, and in prospect; strategy is outlined. The church should be informed of the triumphs of the cross. Where is Christ moving in the land? Where has Satan been vanquished? Where are perils to be avoided? Broadcast these items of common interest. How high is our spiritual ceiling. Is the way clear to go ahead.

"That ye might know our affairs." Paul had preached new doctrines. Was he able to live as he had preached? Had he found God to be all he hoped that He might be? Had Jesus ever failed, or was it always Paul? Was the promised Spirit a constant filling power? How could they receive Power from on high? How should they pray? Was there a limit to what they had a right to pray for and seek from God? Was Paul ever in the depths of his heart afraid of the issue and the possibility of a death of torture? Had he ever asked himself if it were worth while? Or had he ever been tempted to turn back to the old life? The old warrior had much to tell. Tychicus, alone and separated from his master, could speak freely and honestly.

It is amazing what influence Paul exerted through his messengers. Their words fired new enthusiasms, fresh consecrations, new growths. The news of unimpaired health of soul, steadfastness in the face of danger, and unwavering belief that the Cross would triumph over the wrecks of time, the news of fresh channels through which the Gospel might be delivered to others—this was glorious news, eagerly sought by the church everywhere. How eagerly the world listened to words from Little America and the progress of the intrepid South Pole explorers! Their words brought comfort to the civilized world everywhere. Paul was broadcasting from Rome, barren in the fruits of the Spirit, frigid temperatures, uninhabited by citizens of heaven, but glorious in its possibilities for the kingdom of Christ. Paul was raising the Cross of Christ and claiming the Empire of Rome for his Master. This was news. The Cross is still being planted by brave souls on dark isles of the Seven Seas, in mountainous jungles, and barren deserts. Messages are coming from the air, from the mailsacks of airplanes, ocean liners and express trains telling of the triumphs of the Cross. How fares the Gospel in China, in Russia, in Palestine, in the South Seas? We need information, if we would prosper. Missionary news is a spring tonic. We need it. Have you taken your tonic today? The church may always be edified by hearing of the progress of Christ's kingdom throughout the world.

THE BALM OF GILEAD.

And that he might comfort your hearts: The Ephesians had a difficult life. A thousand terrors by day and by night confronted them. No news was bad news to them. Lack of information filled them with fear and forebodings. Something had happened to Paul, at last his enemies had succeeded in reaching him. No—Tychicus would tell them the truth. All was well. There had been minor setbacks, but the truth was marching forward. "And whether ye be afflicted . . . or comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation (II Cor. 1:6)." Strength was to be obtained from afflictions. Suffering was not always a calamity. God rewards the steadfastness of Job. But we must endure to the end and, having done all—stand! Spiritual afflictions are for a purpose (I Pet. 5:9). The pagan believed captivity to be a burden, sorrow and disgrace. The Christian found in prison an opportunity to preach the Gospel. The Philippian jailer never ceased to thank God for a testifying prisoner who brought hope of heaven to himself and his family.

Tychicus' message of comfort might have been of two sorts: one of solace allaying their fears as to Paul's personal safety; or one of comfort through the gospel sufficient for all their needs, God was always with them and would never fail them. It might again have been a means of raising their spiritual temperature and renewing their pledge to pray for believers throughout the world. All three could be balm to the hearts of the Ephesians who so dearly loved Paul and missed his counsel and inspiration. Paul had often been with them, he had labored earnestly and fruitfully among them, his absence was a cause of sorrow and grief. They had suffered from persecution, Satan had tempted them sorely, a lethargy crept over them. They needed comfort, soothing, and rest. The words of this trusted messenger eased their minds and brought calm. We all come to that period when we need calm. As children come to the soothing, comforting words of a loving, sympathizing mother, we bring our sobs and griefs to Christ and find peace, sweet peace. The Gospel never ceases to be a blessing to us all.

There is also comfort in the consciousness that each of us

can be a Tychicus. The Bible is our message of comfort. God is expecting us to take the good news to those who need it. Are we faithful to our trust, or are we forgetting that we have been commissioned and sent to preach the Gospel to the world? Have we given only a part of the message and lost ourselves in a round of pleasurable and social enjoyments? Perform your message as faithfully as Tychicus and you, with him, will be ranked with the immortals. We know little of this man, except that he was worthy of trust, he could be depended upon to do his task faithfully and well. God could say to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thine inheritance." Rebekah had a nurse, Deborah, who was found faithful. In a day when servants had a very low place, this woman won her way into the hall of fame by her loyalty to her duties and her loving service to her master. The Lord is our Master. We are not our own, we have been bought with a price. In the spirit of Him Who girded Himself with a towel and washed His disciples' feet, let us serve to the end of our days. Jesus is counting upon us. He needs us to carry the good news of the Gospel. "Lord speak to me, that I might speak."

XXIII.

A BENEDICTION FOR THE READERS

"Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." —EPH. 6:23.

THE FAVOR OF GOD.

Peace be to the brethren: The epistle closes with a double benediction. The first is upon the Ephesian church, the second is upon believers in Christ everywhere. Ephesians has been addressed to the faithful who love the Lord and have accepted His promised redemption. Paul wishes grace and peace to be the possession of all true followers. He repeats this prayer seven times in this letter. What do we wish for those who love the Lord? What do we ask God to give them? What better gift could he or we desire than that we might be so perfectly united to Him as to have peace for ourselves through Him; peace with God through confession of our sins; and abiding peace with Him through obedience to His commands. As we denounce self and yield completely to Him we find the peace of God which passeth all understanding. Someone has defined a Christian as:

*"A mind through which Christ thinks;
A heart through which Christ loves;
A voice through which Christ speaks;
A hand through which Christ helps."*

The peace of the Christian is a gift of God; it is an evidence of the unmerited favor of God; it produces peace among ourselves; it quiets the prickings of our conscience; our sins have been cleansed in the blood of Jesus and we are reconciled to God. The closer we draw to God the closer we are drawn to each other and the more certain are our prospects of calm and peace. The peace of God is not to be confused with

the peace of stagnation and death, or that stillness which precedes the storm. It is the peace of rest, a reward for a task well done and completed after hard labor. The peace of God is like the peace of those ocean depths where no storm ever wrecks destruction, or those heights of heaven undisturbed by storm tossed billows of dark and ominous clouds. We rise above the distractions of the unbeliever. Surface disturbances can never reach the depths of that inward peace given us by God. When Jesus holds His hand over our wildly beating heart and says, "Peace, be still," He brings us "peace with God, peace with men, the peace of God, peace in the heart and the peace that passeth all understanding." "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God, and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him (I John 5:1)." We have conscious security in Him because we have an approving conscience.

A GIFT OF GOD.

And love with faith: The children of God should be brothers. A mutual love for Him inspires and compels a love for each other which triumphs over the petty misgivings, injuries and hurts which daily intercourse with each other and conflicts of judgment and opinion occasion. Our common salutation and farewell should be one of love. A real love for God impels us to love those who may be distasteful to us. He loved us when we were in sin and a state of rebellion against Him, so we are to love our Christian brothers in spite of their unfairness, their bitterness, their hostility, and their unchristian attitudes toward us. "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." This love for the brethren will come through the channel of faith in God. Faith and love exist side by side in a disciple's heart. We cannot have one without the other. They are like opposite sides of the same coin. Our love comes from the One who is Love, and eternal Love; our faith is from Him who believes in us, and clings to us as to the thief on the cross until our dying moment. Our faith in Him keeps our earthly loves from becoming wilted by the hot blasts of disappointment, resentment or discouragement; our faith in Him keeps our love pure and uncontaminated with the foulness of earthly passions and worldly pursuits; our faith in Him, and

the knowledge that we are members of His mystical body, keeps us from ever taking those steps which would create a state of unrest in this body—His body, of which we are a part. We purpose with His help to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. Such a love, resulting from such a faith, is the only security of a church or neighborhood. Without it organizations and friendships are torn asunder.

Paul seems to be saying to the Ephesians, "You possess that love, keep it; let nothing rob you of the peace you once found in Christ. Find greater enjoyment in your religion, not less. It may be impossible to maintain the same enthusiasm which was first created from the consciousness that God had blotted out all sin, but other causes of happiness will appear as flowers bloom with the passing of the seasons. The blood-root fades, but another flower and other flowers bloom as the summer advances into autumn. Peace, love and faith—what a bouquet of Christian graces! Each and all are needed with their special fragrance and quality to give the Christian the happiness he seeks and desires for himself. Each are to be continuous and progressive in their presence and development within us. Faith lifts the confidence we normally express in each other to the highest level of confidence in the providences of God. This faith in God becomes both "the root and foundation of all strength, blessedness and goodness in human character." When faith operates, love follows and peace will come to abide. Love opens the door to peace, having cleansed the heart of all malice, envy, hatred, wrath and thoughts of revenge. Pray (Rom. 5:5) that the love of God may be poured out in your heart and that it may abound unto all pleasing.

THE SOURCE OF BLESSING.

From God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: A twofold source of blessing is revealed through the Holy Spirit. Peace, love and faith are all gifts of God—the primary source of all Christian grace, the eternal and unchanging One, the One who alone loves perfectly and completely, and the One from whom all blessings flow. The Father of the only begotten Son of God is also the Father of all who have been begotten of Him and become a new creation through Him. God fills us from His inexhaustible store of wealth and riches; He is the vine,

we are the branches; as a branch cannot live apart from the vine, no more can we. Always give thanks therefore to the Giver of every good and perfect gift. God the Father of Jesus is our Father also. The Lord Jesus Christ of the Ephesian church and the saints of all ages is our Saviour also. The Lord filled with truth and grace who alone revealed the Godhead to us, is our Redeemer, Friend and Physician, to keep us in spiritual health. All that He is, we are to become. All that He has is ours. "Ask and ye shall receive." We are one with Him and He is one with us. Paul uses the full title of the Son of God here. He is Lord, Savior and Christ. Is He all these to us? Do we thank Him for these manifold blessings? Have we received all that He has to give us?

XXIV.

A BENEDICTION FOR ALL WHO LOVE THE LORD

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen."
—EPH. 6:24.

THE BLESSING.

Grace: The first word of this letter is also the last. The theme of the great symphony has been played. The introduction is now the conclusion. Yet our understanding of the wonderful grace of Jesus is richer after hearing our standing and state through Christ Jesus our Lord. The Christian life has been portrayed in unmistakable clearness. Grace is invoked upon all in this apostolic benediction: grace—the free undeserved favor of God, the essence of everything Christ has done for us on Calvary. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2:11-14)." "Everything you need to make you good, wise, humble, lovely, useful and happy is in the grace of Christ." Grace has been defined as "graciousness: graciousness of spirit, speech, habits and bearing." Our grace is to be the grace of Christ; no condescension, no pretense, no hollow mockery of spirit, no assuming of the spirit of Christ, but a real, vital, concrete grace and love.

Two forms of this apostolic benediction appear in the New Testament—one short in form (as in Col., I Tim., II Tim., Titus, Heb.), where the words "Lord Jesus Christ" are omitted; the other, longer and complete (as found in Rom., Cor., Gal., Phil., Thess., Philemon, and Revelation).

SCOPE OF THE BLESSING.

Be with all them: All who love the Lord are to share the blessings of citizenship in the Kingdom of God. Love for the brethren is to be broad and deep, inclusive and exclusive. Christians are not to divide themselves into small sects, or separate into denominations with walls so high as to hide the cross or their neighbors. We may wear different uniforms and walk in serried rank, but all march in the army of the Lord and fight a common foe, under the same captain of our Salvation. We are all citizens of heaven and enter into the place which has been prepared for us from the foundation of the world. Paul argues for the universality and unity of the church. Our common love for Christ does not lead to communism, but it does involve sharing with the brethren and sending gifts to "those who are at Jerusalem." We gladly render our tithe. We rejoice together in our love for Christ. We break bread together in the name of Christ. We become yoke-mates in common tasks. Having received from His fullness, we become channels through which His blessing can flow to others. We cannot deny fellowship with any because of color of skin, condition in society, race, financial or social status. Maid and mistress can have family devotions in the same prayer group. Our common heed and dependence upon Him will not permit exclusiveness or selection in our enjoyment of spiritual blessings. When Christ binds us to Him, He binds us also to each other. It is easier to pray than to live the implications of these words. "And this is love that we walk after his commandments (II John 1:6)." We can test the degree to which we have entered into the mind of Christ by our ability to quietly, fervently and honestly voice this prayer and ask that the grace of God may be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE OBJECT OF OUR LOVE.

That love our Lord Jesus Christ: Genuine Christianity always manifests itself in love—an abiding love for the Lord of all, for Jesus the Savior of the world, and for Christ who was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and was anointed to His priestly, kingly and prophetic offices. "Love to Christ,"

says Hodge, "includes adoring admiration of His person, desire for His presence, zeal for His glory, and devotion to His service. It need not be ecstatic, but it must be controlling." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." "If any man love God, the same is known of him (I Cor. 8:3)." We must say with Peter, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." Failure to love Christ brings punishment. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha (I Cor. 16:22)." Though we differ in creed and mode of worship, our love for Christ brings us together before the throne to receive the crown which is "for those who love his appearing (II Tim. 4:8)." This love for Him is demonstrated by our desire to please Him, our fidelity in service, our zeal in advancing His kingdom, our attendance upon the services of the church, our proclaiming of the Gospel in every possible manner, our self effacement, and our being all things to all men for Christ's sake. The soul and life minus this love for Christ become as dark as a windowless, unlighted cellar which never sees the light of day, and as cold and frigid as Arctic wastes. It can neither blossom nor bear fruit. For glorious warmth, life and vitality we look unto Him who is the Author and Finisher of our faith; to Christ who is the goal of all our work, the spring of all our comfort, the harmonizer of our differences, the sole hope of an eternity with God.

Then, our love for Christ brings us closer to each other. As by running your hand down the spokes of the wheel towards the hub you by doing so become closer to the hub, so by drawing nearer to Jesus we at the same time draw ourselves closer to each other. As we draw near to Him love becomes the master passion of our life. For love of Him, we gladly face any situation and dare to do anything. Without hesitation we will go anywhere for Jesus. "Anywhere with Jesus I will surely go." The story is told of an old sculptor who came seeking employment upon a great cathedral in process of construction. The foreman was afraid his unsteady hand might make imperfect work. Yet hesitating to turn away one so anxious to help, he finally placed him high under the dark roof to work upon material there. One day his fellows found his lifeless form with his tools arranged beside him. It so

happened that at that very hour, for only a few minutes, the light shone full upon his completed work—the most beautiful of all. He labored in love for Christ to make his contribution to a great cathedral. Let us do our bit in love for Christ. The Master Workman sees our bit in rewards. It is enough for Him to know.

THE NATURE OF OUR LOVE.

In sincerity: The Authorized Version translates this same Greek word “immortality” in Rom. 2:7. There is to be no dissolution, decay or lifelessness in our affection for Jesus. No change or alteration in its vitality dare occur. Christ’s love works in us and does for us what His love for us does for Himself—develops a changeless Christ even unto the end of the world. His love “cannot die and cannot let die,—it is a love which comes from, exists by, and leads to, the unseen and eternal.” Our love for Christ is immortal; it is eternal in us, which gives us life on earth and carries us into heaven. When we love Christ as He commands us—“Lovest thou me more than these”—this love will keep us so close to Him that neither life nor death can separate us from Him. Christian love is not of earth but of heaven. It never savors of “worldly things which perish with the using (Col. 2:22).” It is neither a passing ray of sunlight to be overshadowed by a cloud, nor glistening dew to vanish with the rising sun, nor a low lying fog to be burned away with the heat of advancing day. It is eternal, of God, and of God who is love. It is not a fleeting warm emotion to thrill and quickly pass away, to give place to despondency and despair. Christ’s love lives in an imperishable soul, which, released from its earthly bondage, flees to mansions eternal in the heavens.

The Authorized Version translates this word “incorruption” in I Cor. 15:42. We are to live with God. Our body may return to dust, but not our love for Christ. When we love Him who first loved us, we begin to take upon ourselves imperishable Godlike characteristics. Our love for God lacks the defects of changing affections of the human heart; there are no divorces in Divine affections begotten of God. Ardor for

Him never cools and chills into lifelessness and bare tolerance. Has what you thought to be devotion to God become a thing of the past—a precious memory, but a memory? If so, your love for heavenly things was flavored with too much worldliness and thought of personal advantage. Perhaps acceptance of Christ was more of an escape from the perils of hell than a yielding of self to service for Him who died on the Cross that by His blood your sins might be forgiven. Perhaps love for Him was a half-and-half mixture, neither bitter nor sweet, neither salt nor fresh—a miserable tasteless brackishness. Let love be with sincerity—purity—wholesomeness—perfection and completeness. “This one thing I do”—love. He cannot serve God and mammon. The word “sincerity” is derived from the words “sine cera.” Indifferent sculptors were in the habit of covering chips, cracks or imperfections in their work with a preparation of wax and other ingredients which completely covered the defect until moisture or heat decomposed the deception and revealed the imperfection. To protect themselves against this deceit and disappointment, benefactors of the arts included in their contracts these words, “sine cera”—without cement. Have you been placing cement in your love for the Master? Have you been whole hearted, true hearted, faithful and loyal without mar to Him? Let us love Him with complete abandon, casting ourselves upon Him as a swimmer relaxes upon the bosom of the ocean for security.

Amen: Our love is proved by our love for God’s word, our obedience to Christ’s precepts, our brotherly love for one another, and our zeal for God’s house. Now comes the great Amen which always follows enumerations of blessings. This letter has been a great challenge to appropriate all the blessings of a new found faith. The apostolic benediction is breathed as a prayer for God’s peace in the heart, God’s love in all our decisions, faith in God anchoring our life, and the grace of God characterizing all deliberations and activities. The final note has now been sounded. The letter comes to a close. The mind pauses for breath and a prayer to God for His blessings. How healthy the body of Christ would be if

this letter to the Ephesians was a reality in the church and the experience of each believing Christian! Take this letter; read it; read it again, and read it yet again: then, on bended knee, appropriate, dedicate, and live forgetting the things which are behind and pressing forward unto things which are before. Amen.

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Epistle of Paul the
Apostle to the Ephesians

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